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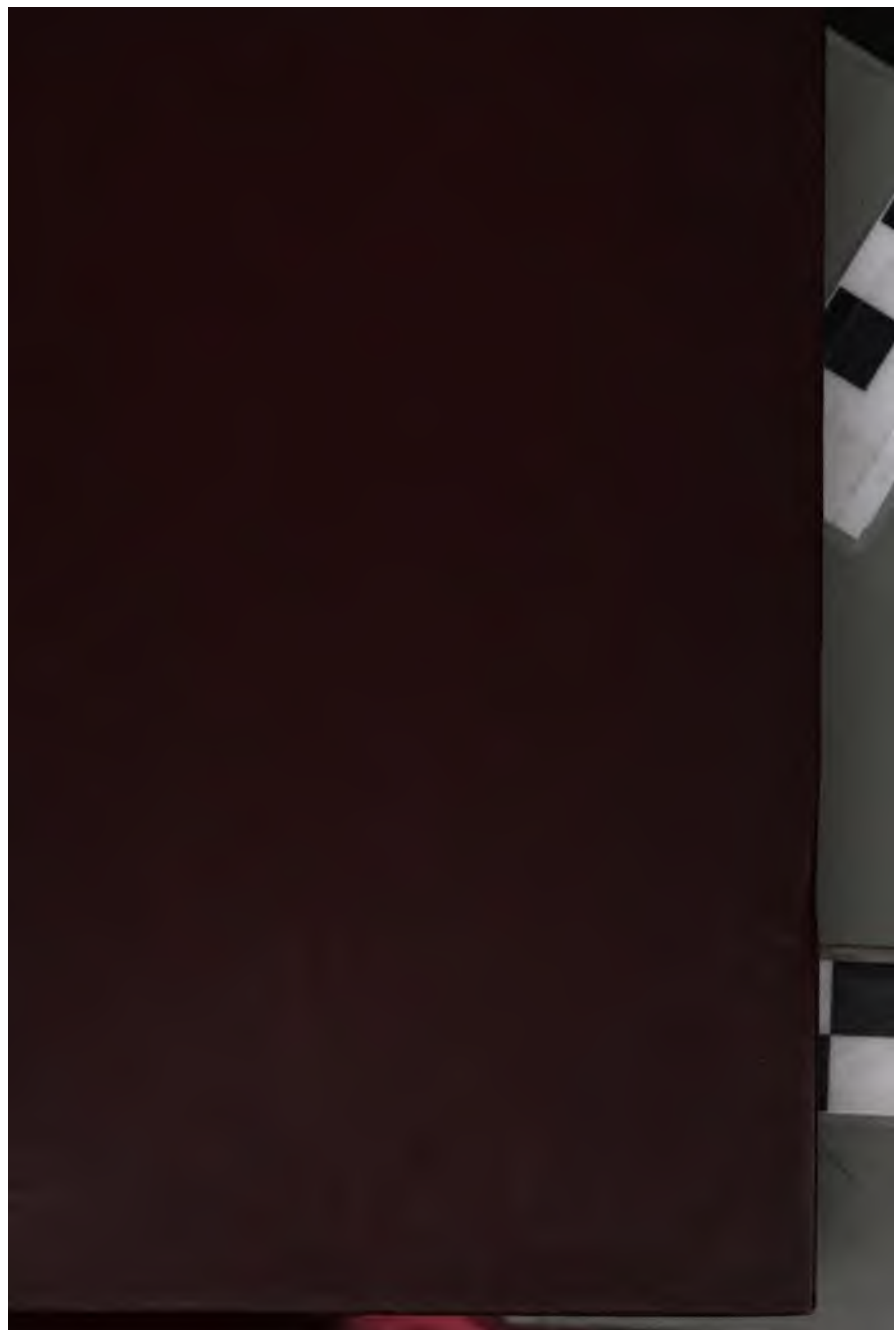
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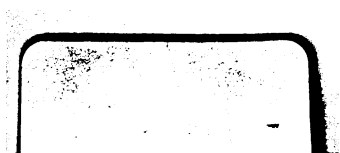
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A Birth Song

AND OTHER POEMS.

Revised Edition

William Keeland

1898.

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A BIRTH SONG

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

WILLIAM FREELAND.

GLASGOW:
JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS,

Publishers to the University.

1882.

ANV2910

THIS was my vision on an April morn :
While yet the Year was as a weanling babe,
The Hours and Days brought gifts of innocence
To please his wondering eye and curious ear—
Beams of the sun and moon and ardent stars ;
Soft winnowings from the South of wing or wind ;
Shrill bursts of sea-blown trumpets from the North ;
The graceful magic of the frost and snow ;
And blithe pulsations of the streams and brooks.
Then as he grew in beauty and desire,
Brought forth the loyal Months their offerings
Of snowdrop, crocus, primrose, daffodil,
Shy cowslip, celandine, and hyacinth,
And daisy, silver ringed and golden eyed,
And other starry gleamers of the wild,
That breathed a fairy odour-storm, and gave
The Year a foreflash of a happy date—
The leaf and blossom of his kingly prime.
And thrilling through the sweetness of his hope,
He heard the voices of the wood and mead—
Dim throstle, dusky merle, and dappled lark ;
The sudden cuckoo, cunning of surprise ;
And last, from spots of green, the bleat of lambs,

The tenderest cry of all the tender spring.
 Came also to the Year the race of Men
 With gifts of deeds—of beauty, truth, and love,
 And charity that, in her gentle self,
 Summeth all virtue, as a gem all light ;
 Conquests of art and science, and the spoils
 Of whole-brained, busy-fingered industry ;
 And argosies of wealth from all the isles.
 Then seeing me amid the throng, he asked,
 "What bringest thou, unburthened as thou seem'st?"
 "Now comes the terror," so I thought. But still,
 Drawn by the kindly glamour of his eye,
 And urged by one dear voice from the sweet heavens,
 I bore me on. Nor stooping low, I said,
 "This little Book of Song—I give it thee!"
 "Thou darest!" "Yea, I dare!" And then he tossed
 One after one the leaves, and hummed and smiled—
 As April smiles on buds wherein he sees
 Some glimmer of a summer that may come—
 Then whispered, as I passed into the crowd :
 "In all the noblest strivings of the bards,
 The first still follows one that goes before,
 The last still hears a toiling foot behind."

April, 1882.

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A Birth Song.

I.

MANY voices, low and high,
Breathe sweet peace through earth and sky—
 Falling waters and blowing winds,
 Musical balms to weary minds :
War and storm rousing valour and fear,
Shaping the thoughts of the potent year ;
 Spirits that strike, as they quiver in fire :
 Psalms of power from the thunder's lyre.
What voice is sweetest, afar or near?
 Listen, and hear !

II.

The red cock waked ere day was born,
And feasted full on barley corn;
And then he vaulted on the wall,
And blew a blast upon his horn,
As if to say, "Take notice all,
I am the finest bird of morn!"
Proud fool! So dingy red and yellow;
The blackbird was a prettier fellow.

The blackbird from an alder nigh,
Unlocked his golden-lidded eye,
And scanned the silent silvering east:
Then dropped into the cool green rye,
And made the early worm his feast;
Then sang he to the morning sky—
Defiant—yet O clear and sweet,
As if no lark was at his feet.

The lark—the bird that sleeps in dew,
And sings in heaven so dim and blue—

Ashamed that he had dreamed so long,
With speed despatched a grub or two,
Then rose on wing supreme and strong,
And sang his song divine and true :
Long, emulous, on the notes he hung,
As if there was no human tongue.

But on that budding April morn,
A tender human babe was born,
Whose eyelids trembled in the dawn
Like two white lily-buds forlorn ;
Whose faint cries wavered o'er the lawn,
And seemed to fill the birds with scorn :
But soon they ceased, abashed and dumb—
The voice and soul of life had come !

III.

Let birds and waters warble clear ;
More sweet this infant voice to me,
Which comes as from the golden sphere,
Where thrills the soul of harmony—

No myriad-mouthéd organ can
Outmelody God-moulded man.

Let sceptres flash, and senates shake ;
The war-steed neigh, the trumpet blow ;
Let banners strike the wind, and make
A splendour where the warriors go—
Within this new-born maiden's eyes
The glory of all conquest lies.

Let knowledge, glimmering on the brine,
Bind isle to isle, and clime to clime,
And through the deep sea's lyric line,
Twangle the piercing psalms of time,
This baby-maid's untuned soul
Shall yet a grander psalm outroll.

For in her soul, serene and clear,
All mortal and immortal shine ;
Eternity, a single year,
Thought glowing into light divine :
The sweetness of the years to be
Is hers, God-given virginity.

IV.

But who shall shape the baby's clothes?

And who shall weave the baby's hose?

And who shall bathe the virgin's limbs?

And who shall breathe the lulling hymns?

Then flashed good-will from many an eye,

As mellow voices made reply :

And needles and spindles twinkled brightly

And maidens melted in music nightly ;

And for a bath the virgin rose

Wept silvery dew in her repose ;

And the evening and the morning star

Shielded the babe from blight and scar ;

And up in the heaven there was a starry sound,

As of the glad-voiced angels choiring round.

Then Helen the dew-lipped planned the clothes ;

And Sibyl the prophetess wove the hose :

And Helen hummed a melody

Of innocence and virginity :

And Sibyl, the seer, the beautiful,

Inwove this strain with the spotless wool :

V.

Lingering day is almost dead—
Twilight holds his feeble head ;
Star-dreams break around his bed—
Lo ! his soul to heaven is sped !

Light the lamp and stir the fire ;
Build the pile of the grey sire ;
Let the new flame, flashing higher,
Priestlike light the solemn pyre.

Maiden, bring my wires and wool ;
Place me now my knitting-stool
Where the lamplight falleth full,
And the firelight waxeth cool.

Thanks ! Now get thee to thy rest,
Sleep is stealing to thy breast ;
Breathe a prayer and then unvest—
Thou shalt prosper in thy nest.

Now I am alone with night,
Let me ply the spindles bright ;
And subdue these coils of wool
Into something beautiful.

Fingers ! ye must mend your pace,
Or the night may win the race.

Time, the riever, sweeps along,
Humming still a tragic song ;
Every stroke a mortal dies,
Leaving tears in loving eyes.
Yet the sand is still undone,
Dream-quick though the atoms run :
Still, although the tide rolls out,
Back it dances with a shout :
For each mortal heart death-stricken,
One is born and others quicken :
Every beat a soul is sent
From celestial banishment—
Banishment remembered not
In this sense-encumbered lot ;

Unremembered, dimly guessed
Only when the soul is blessed
By those dreams that hither roam
From the spirit's ancient home.

What though with the temporal stream
Souls should drift to final dream?
He that sent them may resume them;
Earth can nevermore entomb them:
They have cast their mortal robe
In the trenches of the globe:
It shall moulder, they shall bloom,
Reillumed in blissful doom,
Where their broken lives shall be
Finished to the last degree.
Therefore shall my tears be brief—
Souls that die not need no grief;
They who linger on the stage,
Lapsing, leaf by leaf, to age,
Shivering by an opening tomb,
Touch us with a tender gloom.

But to-night I cannot grieve ;
For as now I sing and weave,
Ever in my soul I see
Forms of white divinity
Crowding round a baby face
In its mortal dwelling place.
Never from my memory
Shall that sight erased be !
There I saw it—see it now—
With the life dew on its brow,
Fresh from that eternal clime
Whence the soul leaps into time,
On the wings of blind desire,
Groping still for light and fire ;
Holding up unseeing eyes
To the all-beholding skies ;
Searching for the spots of dawn
On those milky orbs withdrawn—
Orbs that stream warm life and light
To their sweet-souled satellite.

What is she for whom the rose
In the burning desert blows ?

What is she for whom the fountain
Flashes from the parchéd mountain?
And at whom the lion's eye
Tames its rolling majesty;
And the tigers, while they pause,
Sheathe the horror of their claws;
And mail-handed chivalry
Drops upon ecstatic knee?
Tell me what is she, and whence,
Whose miraculous influence
Thus commands the homage true
That to heaven alone is due?

One among ten thousand, she
Is the flower of chastity;
One in whose unspotted mind
Earth and heaven are interblended,
Like two melodies combined—
Ever closing, never ended;
Mingling in their incompleteness,
Till they grow one perfect sweetness.

One from whose angelic lip
Never can base slander slip ;
Nor in whose transparent heart
 Ever are false words engendered—
Brazen coin, which broken art
 Even to the gods has tendered :
Armed with truth, she builds her story
To the starry heights of glory.

Wander wheresoe'er she may,
Sprites attend her night and day :
In the azure of her eye
 Shines a star no ill assaileth ;
In her breast a sovereignty
 Rules, and over all prevaieth :
Fiends may rise in fire and thunder,
On she passes like a wonder !

This is she to whom is given
Secret armour wrought in heaven ;
And upon whose sacred head
Darts of ill are vainly sped :

Mother Nature knows her well,
As she trippeth down the dell ;
Feels her presence as she treads
Lightly o'er the violet beds ;
When the oaten pipes are trilling,
Prophecies for her fulfilling ;
And when autumn leaves are falling,
And red winter brooks are brawling.
This, the perfect one is she,
Mirror of maturity
In that age when, but to be
Virtuous, shall be grandest dower,
Virtue being the crown of power.

Such is she, sweet maiden, born
On that holy April morn,
When, as to the world she came,
Heaven was bathed in amber flame ;
And the birds were smitten dumb
As they heard her wailings come,
Wavering o'er the milky lawn,
Like the heavenliest voice of dawn.

'Tis for her I weave the hose—
Bless the pretty virgin's toes.

Deftly, softly weave the hose
For the baby's waxen toes :
Leave the old fleece of the dam,
Take the new fleece of the lamb,
From the downs or streamy dells,
Or from hills of heather bells :
Shear it in the dewy morn,
Ere the hunter winds his horn.

Wash the wool as white as snow
In the pool where lilies blow ;
Sun it in the golden beam,
On the bank beside the stream ;
Card it cleanly ere you spin,
Lest some envious speck get in ;
Spin it at the cottage door,
Whispering ditties loved of yore.

Weave the hose with spotless hand,
Star them like Orion's band ;

Sweetly think the while you weave,
Lest the babe have cause to grieve ;
Murmur still a holy spell
That shall evil spirits quell :
When, at length, the task's complete,
Bless the hose, and bless the feet !

Peace ! The hose are woven well ;
Loose the spindles and the spell.
Night is deepening still above me—
O, ye heavenly powers that love me,
Guard me through the solemn night
From delusive dreams and light.
Bless the work that I have done ;
And thrice bless the little one.

VI.

All night the moon was listening
To the nightingale ;
And the glow-worm was glistening
In the grass-green vale.

All night the ships were dancing,
Through the far foam hurled ;
All night the dawn was glancing
From the underworld.

All night the stars were creeping
Towards the ocean swell ;
All night the rose was weeping
O'er the mossy well.

All night, through realms Elysian,
Mother wandered far,
And claspt in arms of vision
Baby like a star.

All night the baby slumbered
 'Tween the breast-orbs white—
Orbs how sweetly cumbered
 With their young delight !

VII.

Night leads the dawn, dawn leads the day,
 Day leads the starry night.
Now light the lamps ; be gay, be gay,
Breathe music and begin the play ;
April is past, and this is May—
 A moon-eyed, mirthful sprite.

Unfold the babe, the bath go bring,
 Pour in the rose's tears ;
And, Sibyl, touch a tender string ;
And, Lily, like the south wind sing ;
Move you, white-armed, a twinkling ring
 To soothe the virgin's fears.

VIII.

Tenderly bathe her dimpled limbs,
Her toes so white and small ;
Breathe in her ear those melting hymns,
Whose music floods and overbrims
The human breasts of all—
For it is all a mother's art
To win the spirit by the heart.

Carefully bathe her brow, and clean,
As if it were her soul ;
And sing those songs that gleam between
Heroic joy and coward teen,
And keep life sweet and whole ;
For 'tis a father's joy to find
The heart still faithful to the mind.

IX.

Lo ! a virgin clean and pure,
Spotless in the sense and soul ;
Thou who formed'st her, keep her whole.
Let her glory still endure,
Till that golden hour of time,
When her soul shall reach its prime.

Then, if heaven have so ordained,
Come a radiant cavalier,
Who shall whisper in her ear
Words of passion, all unstained :
They shall bind their hearts in one—
She the moon, and he the sun.

But, till that fine season be,
Let them live their human life ;
Tempted in the calm, the strife,
Affluence and adversity :
Aid them in their weals and woes,
God of roses and of snows.

X.

Vest the virgin, vest her neatly,
Now that she is bathed so sweetly ;
Vest her limbs, and vest her arms,
Lest she catch ungenial harms.
Trim her round with frills and sleeves,
Like a rose-bud in its leaves.
Bring the hose so prinkt and airy,
Woven by Sibyl's fingers fairy ;
Hang them in a gentle heat,
For the baby's dimpled feet :
Toast her ten white buds of toes
Till they redden like the rose.
Then, ye subtle-lippéd dames,
High, immortal, without names,
Hovering near this babe so young,
Chant, as with no human tongue,
That the soul within the ear
May your witching ditties hear—
Like the melody and motion
Of the heard, but unseen ocean

And you, circling round her, seem
Angels to her waking dream.
In this ecstasy of sound,
Kneel, dear Sibyl, on the ground,
And within the magic hose
Slip the dainty, saintly toes.

XI.

Thanks, O thanks! The rite is done;
Honour to the peerless one!
Lay her in her stainless robes,
'Tween those milky-fountained globes,
Upon which the dawn has risen,
Golden, from the heart's sweet prison—
Blowing warm, as from the south,
Rosebuds to the rosy mouth.

Hist! upon her tender eyes
Breathe, as from the drowsing skies,
Dream-composing lullabies.

Dawn.

IN the cool star-glimmer, night's dream of dawn,
When dew-bells blinked on leaf and lawn,
I rose ere yet the lark's keen eye
Twitched to the first sun-pulse in the sky.
Downward I went by a forest way,
Companionless, to an ocean bay :
And all around the stillness hung
Like silence on a prophet's tongue,
Which may not speak the thing it knows,
Till heaven's fire on the altar glows ;
And I alone of human birth
Seemed all that walked the soundless earth.

 In the blanket of her wing the wren
Slept far within the forest's ken ;

The sinless mouse in her hollow sod,
Lay safe as in the breast of God ;
In honey-golden cell the bee
Hummed in a dream of melody ;
And other tiny pensioners lay
Under the veiling mist till day.

Nor innocent things alone, but those
That make all living else their foes,
Were caught by the opiate clouds that fall
With the shadowy eve on the eyes of all.
The subtle snake lay coiled at ease
By the cedar's many-cycled knees,
Acting perchance, in his curtained brain,
The drama of Paradise again ;
Cheating once more with golden lie,
The mother of all humanity.
The tiger slept in his bosky land,
Dark, like an inly-smouldering brand,
Which, touched by the faintest breath that came,
Would leap to life like a living flame.
Old eagle with talons and beak of blood,

Brooded above the plunging flood,
Fixed as from all eternity
God of the moaning mystery.
Under the billows in caverns dark
Hung suspended the long keen shark,
Till ocean should open his blood-red eye—
To dart on the white ship sailing by.

The forest was passed ; I reached the bay,
Haunted by silence all the way :
The far-borne murmur of the deep
Waked not the sleeping land from sleep :
The music of that tremulent noise
Seemed audible without a voice,
According sweetly with the chime
That haunts the solemn calms of time.

Low-eastward, where dim ocean flows,
Swift points of glimmering spears uprose,
And through the shadowy lanes of light
Vanished the fawn-like stars in fright.
But stilly the forest began to stir

With stealthy wings in oak and fir ;
And roundabout each wrinkled root
Whisked horny claw and woolly foot.
Out of her blanket peeped the wren
With eyes like the eyes of fairy men ;
The innocent mouse on nature's quest
Crept from her Maker's genial breast ;
Forth from his citadel strummed the bee
Blowing the trump of industrie ;
The tiger, at the lark's sweet note,
Woke with a bloodhound at his throat,
And shot a space with a burning mouth,
And dropped like a star in the sedgy south ;
Out of his coils, as from an abyss,
Flashed the old snake with a startled hiss,
And, chased by the ghost of his vision, fled
As if some heel had bruised his head.
A motion I saw on the motionless sea,
Rushing between the dawn and me,
Silent and black as an upturned keel,
Swift as death on an edge of steel—
'Twas the shark who followed in hungry joy

A ship with a death-doomed sailor boy.
The eagle, melancholy shape,
Fatelike, calm, on the shadowy cape,
Oped an unfathomable eye
Full on the dawn's gray-vizored spy,
Then rose on wide heroic wing,
Making the cool air quiver and sing,
And upward wheeled through many a spire
To bathe in the solar surge of fire !

Cobe's Pilgrimage.

WE left a dim half-wakened street,
Deep in the heart of a northern city,
When early birds began to greet
The dreamful dawn with a dewy ditty,
Swelling in joy and melting in pity—
We two, my sweet-mouthed love and I,
Eager to see a country sky.

Good-bye, we said, to the market-place,
Farewell to the cold grey churches all,
Silent of psalms and scant of grace,
Till the next Sunday the bells shall call
The worshipper to his dusty stall :
In our true hearts an altar glowed
For ever to love's immortal God.

Through soundless suburbs we wandered out,
And met fond nature stealing in,
By leaps of green and gleams of sprout,
In spite of wheels and dust and din,
And drowsy virtue and sleepless sin :
To us each blade of grass did yield
The vision of a far green field.

Behind us, a faintly moaning mass,
The city muffled herself in gloom :
Now hail, thou daisy-thinking grass,
Ye forest-altars of pendant bloom,
Voiceful still of a gentle doom !
Our hands were claspt, and, palm to palm,
Our pulses sang a jubilant psalm.

Out of a thrilling cloud the lark
Gave us melodious welcoming ;
On thistle-stalk, like an emerald spark,
The greenfinch fluttered a happy wing—
Each feather seemed to flash and sing :
The music washed our souls so white
That heaven was opened to our sight.

From cool green thickets we heard the noise
Of unseen waters, silver-clear,
Whose blithe heart, taking lyric voice,
Amid the blossoms of the year,
Sprinkled the world with golden cheer :
Enchanted by the ambient clang,
The pebbles in the brooklet sang.

With faltering foot we slipt into
The leafy temples, arched and green,
Where yellow sunshine, glinting through,
Like unheard music, made the scene
A palace for the fairy queen :
Our quick ear heard the subtle feet
Of unseen spirits flying fleet.

And there the wild rose grew, and there
Bloomed patiently the violet ;
The souls of odours filled the air ;
And there, in many a tender jet,
The minstrel waters singing met :
And from each pearly wave an eye
Sparkled as from a living sky.

Through listening fern and dreamy grass

We pushed, and saw in quiet spots,
Serene, in many a clustering mass,

Clear heavens of blue forget-me-nots—

As music welled from throbbing throats :
The wonder broke upon our eyes
Like new stars in new arched skies.

And there, within those sylvan cells,

We lingered, thrilled in soul and sense
By the sweet mystery that dwells

In bud, leaf, flower, and sky intense,

And nature's beauteous confidence :
We felt the touches of the Hand
Whence comes the sweetness of the land.

We lingered till the evening rolled

The sun upon the wondrous sea,
Which oped before him gates of gold

To worlds of flashing pageantry,

Mid bursts of glorious melody :

Good Lord ! how marvellous was the sight
To us, awed pilgrims of the night !

We lingered till the moon arose,
And woke the fluting nightingale,
Who sang of love's delicious woes
Till every star was passion-pale,
And filled with silvery tears the dale—
Till we two human souls became
Like angels purged in silvery flame.

I looked into my love's pure eye,
As tenderly she gazed on me ;
Then with a sweetly passionate cry,
Our warm lips met and took love's fee,
In one long kiss of ecstasy !
Moon, star, and nightingale, and night
Vanished in love's divine delight !

The Captive.

HE sings at dawn, he sings till night,
And singing still is his delight,
In his small tower upon the height :
 He hears the river seaward go,
 Yet never sings he note of woe.

Nor king, nor yet a prince is he,
Nor sultan from beyond the sea :
Yet if in sweet humility
 One gleam of heavenly nature lies,
 He has true kindred with the skies.

Though far within the city's bound
Banished from sylvan sight and sound,
And with no greenery girdled round,
 No paradise of rose, no sky
 Of loveliness to charm the eye :

Yet he has visions of a time
Of rapture in a lustrous clime
Made perfect by one peaceful chime;
Where round him sang the purple seas
Young freedom's ample melodies.

The bearded sailors of the west
Surprised him in his golden nest,
And bore him home with jeer and jest:
Undreaming that a time would come
When he would charm their revels dumb.

They bound him in a house of wire:
They could not bind his heart of fire
That burst in songs of young desire:
The brawny sailors of the west
No longer murmured jeer or jest.

Brave Bird! true heart! sweet soul of song!
Conqueror of banishment and wrong,
They are the slaves that made thy thong.
Free, they are chained: though bound, to thee
Open the kingdoms of the free!

Fount and Sea.

Look at this pearly Well
 Bubbling so cool and calm!
You could lift it up with a shell
 Curved like a maiden's palm:
Now, see how it leaps away
 With foamy flash and whirl,
 Like a blithesome boy or girl
Out on a holiday!

Lo! how its flood expands,
 Fed by the juicy hills!
It windeth about the lands,
 By farms and humming mills
But darker its waves are hurled
 Where cities blur the skies;

And where, from its bosom, rise
The masts of all the world.

Away by harbour and dock,
Where, hopefully singing a song,
The artisan heaves the stroke,
That stuns the sword-arm of wrong :
Then wild, and deep, and free,
On isles that ring like lyres,
The River breaks and expires,
Yet lives in the living Sea.

Voices and Responses.

SAID the lily to the bee,
Come, Rover, lodge with me,
And I will give to thee
Rare sweets to make honie ;
 And the bee, sharp and wise,
 Plunged into paradise.

To the Lark upon the lea,
The cloud said, soar to me,
And I will breathe on thee
All dews of harmonie.
 And the lark, jubilant,
 Rose heavenward with a chant.

Said the white moon, pensivelie,
Sing, Nightingale, to me,
And I will ope to thee
Clear wells of ecstasie ;
 And sweet, the nightingale,
 Thrilled all the nooky vale.

Sighed the lover by the tree,
Haste, Beautiful, to me,
And bending on true knee,
Pure heart I'll give to thee :
 And, mooning in her charms,
 She glimmered to his arms.

Invocations.

ARISE, O sun, and bring
Upon thy genial wing,
The vigour of the morning-tide, the wholesomeness
of day.

Arise, and wake the lark,
That, all the dewy dark,
Amid the green concealing grass, wrapt in a dream-
song lay.

Awake, O drowsy bee ;
Flower-bosoms pant for thee,
And ope, and bloom with beauty, and drip with
hydromel ;
Awake, and join thy hum
To the enchanting sum
Of mirthfulness and melody that now begins to
swell.

Open thy beauty, rose ;
For now the south wind blows ;
And, from the east, thy bold bridegroom is rising
from the sea.

The birds thy praises sing,
And flash their merriest wing,
For there is not, in all the world, a flower to equal
thee.

O lover, ope thine eyes,
And feed no more on sighs,
Or those delicious maladies that make thee lean and
weak.

Cast out, not sense, but fear,
And whistle, cool and clear,
And soon the maid, who wavers now, will not be
long to seek.

O maiden, why so coy?
Seize, seize the proffered joy !
And join the music of thy heart unto the pulse of
man ;

And ye two, being one,
Shall march beneath the sun,
A legion, to repel despair by heaven's diviner plan.

A Nook and a Book.

GIVE me a nook and a book,
And let the proud world spin round :
Let it scramble by hook or by crook
For wealth or a name with a sound.
You are welcome to amble your ways,
Aspirers to place or to glory ;
May big bells jangle your praise,
And golden pens blazon your story !
For me, let me dwell in my nook,
Here, by the curve of this brook,
That croons to the tune of my book,
Whose melody wafts me for ever
On the waves of an unseen river.

Give me a book and a nook
Far away from the glitter and strife ;
Give me a staff and a crook,
The calm and the sweetness of life :
Let me pause—let me brood as I list,
On the marvels of heaven's own spinning,—
Sunlight and moonlight and mist,
Glorious without slaying or sinning.
Vain world, let me reign in my nook,
King of this kingdom, my book,
A region by fashion forsook :
Pass on, ye lean gamblers for glory,
Nor mar the sweet tune of my story !

Work Song.

Ho, leap, if you list, boys, and fly, if you can ;
 Or move to the tapping of drums ;
 Limp or crawl,—but be true to the line of your
 plan,

Though cheered but by cracking of thumbs :
 Be thinking, be working, be marching away,
 Pulse beating that thrills like a rhyme ;
 Though slight be the bravest ascent of the day,
 Heights are scaled by one step at a time.

There's little to lose, boys, but mickle to win ;
 Each morn on its wing brings a chance ;
 Should day's prosy wheel hurt your soul with its
 din,

Sweet evening will bring its romance :

For, ever-and-ever the planet goes round,
Nor yet has it come to its prime ;
It lives, and it blooms, and with glory is crowned
By wheeling one arc at a time.

Awake, and away, boys ; the bugle of morn—
The cock—calls the lingering sun ;
The hungering furrows await the seed-corn—
Up ! sow them ere daylight be done !
Nor grieve though an acre remain to be sown—
Only wait,—there will ring a new chime :
You will hear in the wind that to-morrow is blown,
Faith and Work are the monarchs of time.

Each bud of the spring, boys, in summer will blow,
Cheered by melody, labour, and love :
The juices of earth will be busy below,
And the sunlight will sparkle above ;
Then autumn will come, and the sickles will
swing,
In the battle untainted by crime ;
Each bold brawny reaper will whistle and sing,
Harvest piling, one sheaf at a time.

So, heart full of faith, boys, and arm full of power,
Clear eye on the dawn ever bent ;
Scorch the sun, chill the night-dew, or thunder the
shower,

Still yon star-glowing roof is a tent :
Stand or fall, win or lose—in the battle of truth,
Even defeat were a conquest sublime ;
Persistence is glory ; pure action is youth ;
Heaven springs from the strivings of time !

The Town.

HERE let me linger—let me scan
The features of my native town,
Where first I saw the face of man
And fortune's shadowy smile and frown.
My heart is thawed! Why, yonder stands
The steeple, glimmering as of old,
Where Time, with grey, eternal hands,
Repeats the tale for ever told—
That men, like phantoms, come and go—
The fools of joy, the slaves of woe.

Oft in yon graveyard have I lain
Top-full of dreams—too much alone,
When thought was weltering in my brain—
And mused on the memorial stone.

Around me slept, in peaceful death,
The mortal masters of their clime :
" Here lies," sweet Reputation saith,
" The quintessential dust of time !"
Nought of the legend may I bate,
For truth is more with love than hate.

I grew—a lawless cub I grew :
I scampered thorough field and wood ;
And every morn that dawned was new,
And all the feast of life was good.
Yet soon the inevitable years
Brought deeper music—darker dreams :
I felt the scalding track of tears—
The pressure of unsolvéd themes.
A spell of gloom was laid on me
By the black witch, Necessity.

But then came love—the subtle sprite—
And, whispering, bade my heart aspire,
Whereat a shock of wild delight
Convulsed me like electric fire ;

And, night and day, where'er I went,
The vision of a nameless face
Filled me with holy ravishment,
Like a new soul of heavenly grace.
Vain fool ! to think that she could be
More than a beauteous dream to me !

But that was many years ago.
I left the town ; it was too small—
Too small for truth ; too old for woe :
Besides, I heard stern voices call
Out of the future : I obeyed :
The primal vision of my youth
Slid silently into the shade
Before the larger form of truth.
I hated then my native town,
And deemed it had a stained renown.

But slowly have the rounding years
Evolved the sweeter thoughts of man,
Which dry and soothe the bitter tears
That flow at youth's defeated plan.

So, standing here, where paced of old
The warriors of Imperial Rome,
I feel that it is sacred mould,
And holy with the name of home :
Now, ancient town, thy worth hath won
A loyal and repentant son !

Since first I wandered hence, the grave
Has swallowed many a saintly face,
And many an honest fool, and knave—
God take them all into his grace !
And where are they with whom I played—
Gay schoolmates of my early prime?
Not one now fills his native shade,
To mock the scattering hand of Time ;
They voyage wide with restless feet,
Through Polar cold and Tropic heat.

Ah, comrades ! were you here awhile,
Where Kelvin rolls his tremulous flood,
Anew both heaven and earth would smile,
And love's old vintage warm our blood :

Again our laughter and our glee
Would shake the drowsy echoes up ;
Our joy would spite cold Destiny,
And spill the poison from his cup :
But far by other vales and streams
Ye seek fulfilment of your dreams.

And where is he, dear son of song,
Who walked beside me, bright as morn,
Burning to cope with that high throng
Of men, the first and mightiest born ?
I heard him sing ; I saw him shine,
The moon of love, the sun of truth ;
He thrilled me with his tender line,
The beauty of his mortal youth :
God loved him most—the sweet lamb-souled—
And took him to His starry fold.

One joy the less, one grief the more,
Are mine, since Life's pale shadow, Death,
Met him on Fame's illusive shore,
Wailing to heaven in passionate breath—

“Oh ! to be known among my kind !”

That wish was like bewildering fire ;
It blurred the beauty of his mind,
And clouded each divine desire.
Said Death—“So be it ; yet thou must die
To gain thine immortality.”

A sudden and a fearful phrase,
With double scope, and doubly true ;
For in his soul was nothing base—
So God made Paradise his due.
And now that he is known in heaven,
His name is dearly loved on earth—
A May-white bloom untimely riven
In the green valley of his birth :
The earnest songs he warbled then,
Still sing within the hearts of men.

He sleeps between his native streams,
In that “Auld Aisle” that fronts the south.
Where he was lapped in living dreams ;
Where low he lies with songless mouth.

The Luggie flows by Oxcang woods,
The Bothlin Burn by Woodilee,
In whose enchanting solitudes
He woo'd his darling Poesy,
Who, sorrowing, sits by Bothlin Burn,
Or broods beside her hero's urn.

The Daisies.

How happy was the day and sweet
When first I saw her pearly feet
 Skip twinkling through the daisies !
How joyous was my heart when first
On me her bloom of beauty burst,
 A daisy mong the daisies !

Bright in the azure of her eye
Sparkled the treasures of the sky,
 The purity of daisies :
Rich in the rapture of her tongue
Each golden lilt of morning rung
 With larks, the souls of daisies.

But O the cruel eve too soon,
And the hoar stars and the wan moon,
 Brought tears unto the daisies ;
For she, my love, their fairy-mate,
Was snatched away by wrinkled Fate,
 A daisy from the daisies.

Antermomy.

O HAPPY hours among the hills,
 Where flashed the foam of whirling rills!
 O sweet the days of love! O bonny
 The green, green banks of Antermomy!

We roamed in joy that heathery clime,
 Nor feared eternity nor time;
 With all the hours around us streaming
 We dreamed, nor dreamed that we were
 dreaming:

From sunrise, where the splendour grows,
 The balm-winds gloated round the rose;
 We wandering, pure souls undaunted,
 Through realms of blissful love enchanted.

From sunset, where the glory dies,
Love laughed through her one star's disguise—
Beholding our dear love-embraces
And the sweet rapture of our faces.

But lo! the one consummate hour
That gives to passion kingly power,
Rose and re-told our tender story,
And crowned us in our blushful glory.

But from those molten moods of youth
Grey time, who loves the soul of truth,
Soon wrought in us the calm of reason
That gives to love its longest season.

Now, dearest, as we look behind,
And face the unalterable wind,
We see the harbour whence we came,
And feel the same, and not the same.

And, dearest, when we look before,
Across the surge that beats the shore,

We see the starlike peaceful isle,
That shall receive us after toil.

But here or there, where'er we go,
In wealth or want, in joy or woe,
We never shall forget the bonny—
The green, green banks of Antermoney!

Gilg.

WHAT! a child of three years' growth!
Nature then hath known no sloth
In a work so fairly done
By thrice rounding of the sun.
Lo! what wisely uséd power
Can accomplish hour by hour!
Every lineament is drawn
With the genius of the dawn;
Every living curve is bright
With a dazzling morning light,
Every dimple is a pool
Of ethereal vintage full,
Whence a man might quaff and be
King of more than kingdoms three.
Look, her crown of golden curls
Makes her queen of all the girls;
And that light within her eye

Might arouse old chivalry
From the dreams of ancient time,
To adventure deeds sublime.

Lovely Lily—Lily dawnlike,
Nimble Lily—Lily fawnlike,
Tripping with a foot as airy
As the foot of fabled fairy,
Come, enchant me ! with thy lips
Thrill me in divine eclipse,
That my common soul may be
Snatched from earth to heaven by thee.
Bless thee, child ! now skip away,
Change green April to white May
With the sorcery of thine eye :
Wake the star-blooms in the sky
With thy laughter. With thy smile
Banish pain from heavy toil,
That some weary mortal may
Bless the hour and bless the day
That he found the way to grace
In thy heaven-suggesting face !

Can it be, but three years old !
Why, methinks thou art as bold
As a fearless boy of ten !
Thou canst look on bearded men
With a most unwinking eye :
Knowledge hath not made thee shy.
Queenlike, with a gemlike hand
Merely twinkle thy command,
Men invincible to might
Will obey thee with delight.
'Tis no wonder : the high dower
Beauty hath is sovereign power.
Dearest Lily, happy we
Who are liegemen unto thee :
Gentlest of all queens thou art,
Seeking only from the heart
What a spotless heart can pay
In the tender light of day.

In Spynie Wood, near Elgin.

HERE let me sit. The air is still and sweet
Under the green wings of dear Spynie wood.
The sun stoops westward, and the eastern waves
Are weltering mid a trailing net of gems.
Cool child of glowing day, soft sentient eve,
Consoler of the sadness of the world,
I love thee most ! No feverish town I hear,
As in a humming dream. More sweet to me
Thy dewy presence in the dewy wilds ;
Not wholly silent, yet with sounds that touch
The silence with enduring tenderness—
Small voices that, combined, make melodies
Enchanting to an ear that loves to dwell
In lonely forests and by lonely seas.

The trees seem conscious of the Sabbath eve,
And tune their leafy whispers to the mood
Of psalms, that thrill the holy time. From each
A different, yet interblending note
Is breathed, as if one spirit guided all
To one unbroken, perfect harmony
Of heaven-ascending, heaven-accepted praise.
Yet, not the trees alone are musical
Of Nature's secret soul. The finite midge,
That dances multitudinous in the shade,
In his small function knoweth God, and sings
His touch of rapture in the evensong.
Grasshopper lispeth to the listening grass
His silvery fancies ; and pure-throated birds
Storm the still air, and flood the eventide,
And overflow the vale with ecstasy.
Far in cool forests, hid in solemn pines,
The wild dove burns, and murmurs to the dove :
And, answering from a leafy neighbourhood,
The blackbird pours the fountain of his song
In mellow trills, and wakes the echoes up,
Sending them posting through the woody world

To tell his perfect passion, and bring back
Quick-winged responses. On a verge of green
The cuckoo utters his prophetic note,
Doubling the promise of a happy Spring,
Bright Summer, and a rich, ripe, golden Fall,
With corn and wheat and shining orchard fruits,
And the immortal bleedings of the vine.
From the pervading grass the lark upsprings
To his divine dominion : sweet and clear
He sings the Sabbath into holier peace
By passionate iteration ; stirs the wells
Of tender prayer that, so troubled, heal
The wounded soul ; and gives to brooding thought
A thrilling as of wings that soar in heaven
Soft-poised, in dovelike equanimity.

How lovely and how holy is the eve,
With all this peaceful harmony ! Dear God !
Thou movest in the meadow and the wood,
And to all simple creatures givest power
To utter their dim knowledge of Thy love,
And worship Thee, impelled by utter joy.

I too, who see Thy spirit year by year
Stir in each vague vitality, and grow
From root to spine, from spine to leaf and bud,
And thence to glory in the perfect flower—
I, more and more, though crushed by sins of sense,
Yet feel Thy continuity of love,
And worship Thee amid forgetfulness,
Though less by knowledge than reposeful trust—
As a blind baby, in dim realms of sleep,
Clings to the rosebud of its mother's breast
While tempests roar and earthquakes heave the
world.

A Summer Hymn.

THAT we have lived, live now, and know we live,
And see Thy bounties from the heavens come down
With sunlight, moonlight, and the fruitful rain,
We praise Thee, praise Thee, Lord of Light and
Life !

Thy mercies come to us unmerciful ;
Even through the war of our insurgent blood,
We hear Thy choiring angels sing of peace,
And know that thou Thyself art near us still,
With heaven in both Thy unobtrusive hands
To give Thy children. Mighty is our loss !
Spurning Thy truer spirits, we entertain
The specious forms of sin. Ah, deaf and blind !
Too late we hear the pleading voice of Love

Breathe through our shapeless unpellucid dreams
That mystify Thy glorious attributes :
Late, late we find—if haply we do find—
The way of life by which, deep scarred, we leave
The gilded paradise of all our woe, ♦
Which to our moted vision seemed to be
The dwelling place of gods. Our present life
Is saddened by the deeds of former times.

No vain caprice doth ever move Thy hand
In its good offices. Behold, even now,
Though we are unrepentant, earth is full
Of Thy unmeasured mercies. Every field
Smiles with Thy glory ; and each chiming voice
In forest, or on heaven's invisible thrones,
Has one soul-soothing song. The sweet wind sings
Soft hallelujahs round the perfect rose ;
And each replenished stream melodious rolls
From gleaming uplands to the downward dells.
Earth is one smile ! If Nature sings and smiles,
Inspired by genial spirits, shall the soul
Of man do less, when she beyond this sphere

Can look, and see each brighter consequence
Rise radiant, dawn on dawn, like heaven on heaven?
The larger spirit owes the larger debt;
Yet we who come from Thee, and grow to Thee,
Could never pay our everlasting due,
Did'st Thou, the Soul of Love, all-merciful,
Fail in Thy tender tenderness to man!

Therefore to Thee, the ever bountiful
Rememberer, supremely Beautiful,
Who hear'st the twitter of the youngling wren
Lodged in its hollow globe of woven down,
In the far forest, secret, deep, and still,
We move our lips uneloquent, and breathe
Hushed prayers, songs audible to Thee alone,
To whom the silent wish is loud as bells.
Love us, and make us love Thee, evermore
And everywhere, of varying time and place;
Whether the night be o'er us, or the day,
Or the grey twilight of a heart-born grief!
Whatever is, we ever are with Thee,
For Thou dost fill all spaces Thou hast made—

Where the most peaceful planets shine delight,
Or where the star-worm lights a grassy nook ;
Where deeds of charity make human joy,
Or where inhuman war makes human woe.
While yet the flickering curtains of repose
Shut out the impatient couriers of the dawn,
On Thy world-bearing wing we softly lie,
Where all night long, beneath the healing stars
We slept, while Thou with speed that drowned the sense
Of speed, did'st bear us o'er the populous gulfs,
Through glimmering aisles of sweet solemnity
O'erarchéd by the gleaming plumes of peace,
To the fresh airs and roses of bright morn.
And when vague sleep is chased by light away,
Thy pure unwrinkled angels hither come,
And with persuasive voices minister
To each diviner sense—entreating us
Out of our baser to our nobler selves,
And thence to Thee, the end.

Open our souls,
That we may see Thy pure prevailing light ;

Soften our hearts that we may feel Thy love ;
Temper our minds that we may think of Thee
Without the slave's dark fear ; and make us wise
With Thy eternal wisdom, that we may
See, love, and worship Thee, the Only One,
In cold, in hunger, and in wretchedness,
And spurn the pangs that beat us down from Thee,
And bear the cross whereon we may be nailed,
With patience to the Mount of Sacrifice !

Elegy on a Local Poet.

DEATH takes the little and the great :
Shakespeare he took ; he taketh thee :
He—thou—we all—or soon or late,
Must bend to the Divine decree—
The wren, the nightingale, the lark,
And Homer old, and Andrew Park.

Was *he* a poet? critics bray :
And was he not? I answering ask :
All human harps have strings of clay ;
And language is a mouldering mask :
Apollo chanted in the dark ;
Just so, *if* so, did Andrew Park.

What though no song of his remain
To heal the tragedies of time?
The strains of Homer's golden brain
Shall melt in some diviner chime :
As long as any classic spark
Shall live the soul of Andrew Park.

Nor deep in thought, not high in art ;
A rhymer of the rhyming clan :
A simple head, a genial heart,
To woman true, nor false to man ;
A poet on his little arc—
Was Milton more than Andrew Park?

No tale of Paradise or Troy
Shall star his name through alien skies ;
But his soft lilts of love and joy
Shall brighten long in Scottish eyes :
Sweet lips, though critics bite and bark,
Shall breathe the songs of Andrew Park.

But lo, the end ! Our faithful bard
Is laid within his hollow bier,
Beyond or true or false regard,
Or woe, or want, or fame, or fear :
Beholding thee so still and stark,
I pray God keep thee, Andrew Park !

"Paradise Lost."

"So, after long laborious days, we reach
The sad conclusion of our tragic song.
Far from the world, my daughter, have we toiled—
No loss to me, and surely none to thee;
For since the death of our great Oliver,
The one strong spirit of his time, who held
The wanton world in awe, and taught this land,
This faltering England, to hold up her head
Highest among the nations, keeping down
All powers that mocked sweet liberty, and made
Of Church and State one hideous den of thieves
Till virtue languished, and till brazen lust,
Ruling in spheres of thought and statesmanship,
Poisoned religion and morality,
The fountain-heads of life—since he went forth,

Our grand Protector, to that larger life,
Wherein no pausing is, or going back,
But blessedness of continuity,
Our England once again goes down to death,
Cursed by a king who reigns, but cannot rule.
Poor country ! would these eyes were whole again
So I again might lose them for thy sake—
And ever lose them till thou wert redeemed
Out of thy monstrous coil of evil minds.”

Thus blind old Milton to his daughter spake,
In stern, sad syllables, with piteous sighs.
It was an evening in the front of May,
Whose airs and odours, blown from happy fields,
Brought to the poet whiffs of countryness—
Bird-melodies, and music of sweet brooks ;
Bleating of lambs, white-lying in green holms ;
With liltings of the merry milking maid :
And visions of the beauty of the land—
Calm, sea-like meadows, with their daisy-isles,
With cattle brooding deep in emerald bays,
Fringed by a silent surge of hawthorn bloom ;

The May-woods flushed by sunset, smit by song ;
And nooks of peacefulness that draw man's thoughts
Beyond the reaches of his eye, to realms
Of unexpounded mystery, whence come
The spells that breed in him immortal dreams.

How sweet these simple sounds and scenery
Unto the bard, long-poised on tensest wing
In epic climes, mid epic forms and deeds !
His soul, wide-wandering in luminous heaven,
Had seen the wondrous angel fight and fall ;
Had tracked him through dim hell, and thence to
earth,

In whose one Eden, God's Life-miracle
Had issued in the forms of man and wife ;
To whom the weird of knowledge, sweet at first,
Came with its sequent heritage of pain,
From those too subtle lips that charm man still
To spoil the blessing of the unpossessed,
And with possession be expelled from bliss.

The poet in his mind rehearsed his song ;

Hummed o'er its mighty numbers and events,
Deep-rolling like the thunder of the sea,
Or murmuring like the sea in happy shells,
When summer wanders by the sunny shore.
His daughter, watching his far-brooding eyes,
Made question if the end had come ; and he,
Pausing a space, and, gently sad, replied—
“What you have writ might fitly end our toil ;
But add these lines, my daughter, and have done :

‘They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand ; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms :
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them
soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide :
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and
slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.’

"So ends our song, in sadness, as befits
Not less the wondrous theme than our own plight.
We, too, are banished, as the world conceives :
But O, how different our banishment
From theirs who, daring all, soon found how dear
The sudden light let loose by deeds of ill,
That flung them from the Eden of their youth !
So is it not with us. They tempt in vain,—
The jewelled Leprosy who wears the Crown,
And they who, beast-like, lick his unclean hands.
None of their dead-sea apples shall we eat,
To lose the Eden of our great resolves.
Nor shall we quake, although they burn our books.
Truth comes and goes ; it never can be slain ;
But like a cherub, winged with flame, it mounts,
Invincible to hate and homicide.
The law of heaven they bend, but cannot break,—
It springs upon them in divine recoil ;
They pass and perish like a summer-cloud.
Theirs is a paradise of paramours ;
Ours is a garden of sweet temperance.
The flaming sword waves over them ; o'er us

The wing of the Eternal hovers still,
In our deliberate poverty for right.
We have the liberty of honest minds,
The crown of starry thought, the spirit of hope,
Whose strenuous wing shall bear us still aloft
To heights of prophecy, wherefrom to see
The soul of England, from the evil cloud,
Wherein it wanders, rising like a star,
To lead the feebler empires of the world !
Then shall the spirit of great Oliver,
And haply mine, and all who wrought for truth,
Shakespeare the golden-minded most of all,
Make merry in some goodly sphere of heaven,
That England, dear brood-mother of the isles,
Purged from all baseness, pure and just and free,
Makes all her conquests in the fields of peace."

"The Earth is the Lord's."

LORD of the lambkin and the lion,
Lord of Benlomond and Mount Zion,
Of Israel and Italy,
Watching in sweet tranquillity,
I worship Thee !

Lord of the glow-worm and the planet,
Lord of dim Patmos and green Thanet,
Of Jordan's flood and Highland Dee,
Touched by their waves of harmony,
I worship Thee !

Lord of the sunrise and the sundown,
Lord of Jerusalem and London,
Of ruined Babylon, Rome the free,
Awed by sad tales of tragedy,
I worship Thee !

Lord of the well-spring and the geyser,
Lord of Jew Paul and Roman Cæsar,
Of England and deep Germany,
Dreaming of wondrous times to be,
I worship Thee !

Lord of the lark—heaven's happy roamer,
Lord of King David and blind Homer,
Of Scotland and green Galilee,
Illumed by fires of memory,
I worship Thee !

Lord of pale Dante, Plato olden ;
Lord of grand Milton, Shakespeare golden ;
Of Knox—of fearless Luther, he
Who gave the world new eyes to see,
I worship Thee !

Lord of the dewdrop and the ocean,
Lord of each heart's divine emotion,
Of heaven-born science piercing free
To the sweet soul of mystery,
I worship Thee !

Teach me, dear God, and make me lowly,
Purge me with light, and make me holy;
Let me be crucified, and be
Christlike, with Christ's humility—
Adoring Thee !

Master and Man.

UNBLESSED for ever shall he be
Who does not feel within his task
A presence of sweet mystery,—
As if an angel wore a mask
To lure him to a reach beyond
The measure of his daily bond.

His deeds shall wither in his hand,
Nor sweeten life in any land.

Not such was he, wise Florentine,
Who shaped and graved the pliant gold
In leafy visions of the vine,
And deeper marvels manifold ;
For beauty bloomed within his ken,
Hid from the casual eyes of men.

He smiled delight—the very tomb,
When he passed by, had less of gloom.

The master—who had tilled his youth,
And planted deep the seeds of art
Fast by the flowing founts of truth,
Until his soul possessed his heart—
Rejoiced to see the cultured hand
Reach out to spheres of large command.

The ancient goldsmith blessed the day
When little Andreas came his way.

So merrily now the anvils rang,
Till from each shapeless mass of gold
Such wondrous forms of beauty sprang,
As kings' eyes sparkled to behold ;
And Andreas, the Florentine,
Was praised in royal cups of wine.

But sweeter was a rose half blown
Than all the voices of a throne.

And sweeter was the keen delight
That kindled in his master's eye,
As, gazing on some feat of might,
He smiled—as smiles the summer sky
On wild flowers that by Arno spring,
When Arno's woods with music ring.

Those smiles to him were fitting wage
To pay the labours of an age.

Yet, though no laggard was his hand,
He toiled with patience, knowing still
That deeds, once done, will somehow stand
To praise or mock the artist's skill:
His work grew calmly like a flower,
Through faith and hope to grace and power—

Though all the beauty that he wrought
Was but the dream of what he sought—

To grace no golden wage can pay,
To power beyond a shoulder starred;

For riches are but gilded clay,
And honours are a brief regard :
True artist's wages you shall find
Eternal children of the mind :

Enough for Andreas that he saw
His children touch the higher law.

He kept his quiet heart at home,
Nor trafficked with his just renown ;
He would not sell his soul at Rome
Nor Paris,—no, nor London town :
He would not leave his master old,
Though Thames and Tiber ran with gold.

Free breath—and in the humblest home—
That was to him eternal Rome !

So merrily still the anvils rang
In Florence ; and the Arno's flood,
Mingling its sweetness with the clang,
Made music in the artist's blood,

Still working at the self-same plan—
Contented master, peaceful man !

Can ye who do or suffer wrong
See any gospel in this song?

Helen.

I.

THIS morn I heard the lark sing
Ere yet the sun was up ;
This morn I saw the dew gleam
Within the lily's cup ;
This morn I heard the white lambs
Bleat softly on the lea—
And O my soul grew tender
With sudden thoughts of thee !

In happy, happy green lands
I heard the first cuckoo ;
In shady, scented pinewoods
I heard the wild doves woo ;

And mingling with their music,
I heard the humming sea—
And O my soul grew tender
With throbs of love for thee !

This eve I saw the sun flash
Into another dawn,
As down the dewy woodlands
Slow paced the gleaming fawn :
Then all the shadowy green brake
Was thrilled with melody—
And O my soul grew tender
With sweet desires of thee.

This night I saw the young moon
Bloom in delicious skies ;
And brightly on her beauty
Heaven ope a thousand eyes :
And sun, moon, star, and bird sang
'Can aught more glorious be ?'
But O my soul grew tender
With lovelier dreams of thee !

II.

Do what time will, I bless the day
When first I saw thy winsome face,
So full of April and of May,
And more than summer's light and grace.
Full twenty Aprils, prinkt and pied,
And twenty Mays, all hawthorn white,
Have budded, flourished, waned and died,
In tender solacements of night—
Since in a flush of golden weather,
Two spotless hearts, we came together.

What though the sculptor of the years
Hath carved upon thy gracious brow
The record of strange joys and fears?
To me thou art as lovely now!
Still in thine eye the light of love
Makes morning, as in cloudless youth;
Still in thy heart the tender dove
Burns with the pure desires of truth:

Nor ancient tears, nor present sorrow,
Can mar the prospects of to-morrow.

So, heart to heart, and hand in hand
And foot to foot, let us advance :
Across the moor, the thorny land,
Beyond the stars of young romance,
I know a quiet nook, where we
May rest, while life is tossed and whirled,—
Where haply we may dream or see
The last deep vision of the world :
And in a purer, sweeter weather,
Still softly sleep and wake together.

The Prince.

THE earth upon her stealthy pole
Had wheeled into the vernal arch,
What time pure spirits stir the soul
Like buds that prick the palms of March,—
Hinting that star-eyed April soon,
With May behind her like the moon,
Followed by marriage-making June,
Was coming from the south
With new songs in her mouth.

It was that season, keen and clear,
And snowdrops had begun the year.
The blackbird whistled within his tree
Melodiously and merrily;
And all the glades took up the song,
And rang it gloriously along

Until it reached a palace white,
A silver star in golden light,
And broke the wondrous spells of night.

Forth from his couch with early morn
Sprang the young prince at sound of horn,
And rode through many a winding mile
Into the rosy blush and smile
Of full-faced day. At length the chase
Eddied into a lonely place ;
And, skirting the haggard face of a wood,
It lengthened out at a long-limbed pace
Into a sky-walled solitude,
Where the tally-ho and the bay of hound
Grew thin on the utter edge of sound.

But the prince's steed refused to swerve :
And, scorning the twinge of the bridle-nerve,
It held right on with a mightier plunge,
Through a forest space of blasted moss,
That trembled before as he bounded across,
And sputtered behind like a field of sponge.

Seven measureless leaps, a mystic number,
And the bright Arabian creature stood
Sheer on the brink of a sylvan flood,
Where a beautiful boy lay curled in slumber.

Sleeping he smiled, and waking he laughed ;
With a little cup from the fount he quaffed,
Saying, "Thrice welcome, my spotless prince !
I have waited long—nay, ever since
The passionate kiss of the lunar beam
Enchanted the waves of this pearly stream.
See how it ripples, so clear and cool,
Like melted gems in a pebbly pool !
But less than this were less by far
Than glowworm's light to the morning star ;
For this sweet mirror was made to show
A vision, to cause thee joy and woe.
I have waited long ; but well I knew,
By the glister of yester evening's dew,
That the hour had come ; and the prince in-
deed
Would come on a radiant Arabian steed,

Brought hither by a deep-wrought spell,
To find his weird at the mystic well.
So welcome, prince ! brief let me be ;
I have joy to make in a far countrie."

"O, beautiful boy ! whence—what art thou,
With the bloom of Gods upon thy brow?
Thy words are clear, thy meaning wild ;
Thou speak'st like a man, yet seemest a child.
What vision is this that thou wouldst show,
Horned like a beast with joy and woe?
Sweet boy, how should it bring to me
Strange sorrow and rare felicity?"

"Why, prince, 'tis more than strange that thou
Shouldst see that light upon my brow,
And not remember who I am :
It looks not well, a prince so blind !"

"Rash boy, beware ! I am no lamb,
To take thy folly, as 'twere the wind,
And not reply in fiercer kind !"

Then that eternal boy upsprang
Like lightning with a brow of thunder,
And gave the string of his bow a twang
That almost rent its tips asunder ;
The little wings at his shoulders and heels
Shook and quivered like dazzling wheels ;
The red sharp gleam of his narrowed eyes,
Like stormy stars in huddled skies,
Shot frequent flame on the prince so sweet,
As if to scorch him from head to feet.
Much marvelled the prince, but did not fear,
Though the boy flashed fire from ear to ear,
And fingered his half-expended quiver,
Drew and returned the puniest arrow,
That seemed too small to pierce the liver
Of a love-lean hare or a city sparrow.

“ Prince,” quoth the imp, “ thou doubt’st my
power,
And think’st it either treason or folly ;
But I am the lord of this ripened hour,
And will sting thee pale with melancholy.

Lean hither, my prince, and truly tell
What vision thou see'st in the amber well."

"Thou wingéd riddle, I see a face
Rich with an unrecorded grace ;
But what is the phantom-face to me ?
And what am I or my fate to thee ?"

"Thou know'st not yet, but soon wilt find,
When I have awoke the dread power in thy mind :
That vision will haunt thee by night and by day,
When thou goest to hunt or kneelest to pray.
Glance hither, and scan this perfect arrow,
 Hewn from the toughest ring of an ash :
Shod with joy and winged with sorrow,
 It will enter your bosom without a gash.
Tis my only visible wand of power,
And thus I wield it this fateful hour--
Nay, prince, thy violence were in vain--
So, ho ! the arrow is buried amain !
At first deep wounds make little pain,
And thus it is thou laugh'st again.

But the hidden shaft was steeped in wine
Which the bardic masters call divine :
It shall widen thy heart and open thine eyes,
Till thou see'st, through nature's dim disguise,
The glory, the splendour, the starry romance
Invisible to man in his evil trance.
Incredulous ! Then behold once more
The vision that touched thee not before !
What sayest thou now ? Is't only a face
Rich with an unrecorded grace ?
Or is it, as I do shrewdly guess,
A face of infinite loveliness ?
Aha ! thou art silent, and pale, and sick !
So rankles my shaft in the tender quick ;
It proves my power and my perfect art ;
For thine is a royally moulded heart,
And not too easily stricken, I fear ;
But stricken thou art, and that's my cheer.
Sweet prince, I triumph in thy defeat ;
Thou knowest I am no lying cheat.
I work by a strong authentic spell—
On authentic hearts and souls as well.

I tell thee, the vision which maddens thy mind
Is a vision of real maidenkind,
And one whom a dauntless heart may find.
On thee, my pallid prince, she waits,
Lingering by her father's gates,
Scanning the orb of each traveller's eye
That beams with the light of an English sky.
Hence!—seek her, and find her; I bid thee go;
Seek her, and find her, and heal thy woe!
Farewell, my prince; in a far countrie
I have others to smite as I've smitten thee—
I am the genius of Archerie!”

Thus spake the lustrous archer lad,
Then hastily strode through the forest pad,
Lightsome, and airy, and jubilant,
Humming a dithyrambic chant;
Which touched the sense of the prince like a strain
Blown at eve from the ebbing main.

The reflux chase from fields afar,
Grew on his ear as the evening star

Grows on the eye, when the dimmer lights
Follow her from their mystic heights.
From distant meadow and lonely mound,
Where blew the horn and bayed the hound,
Came fitful and muffled gusts of sound ;
Rising, and falling, and dying away,
Like the beat of the brine in a hidden bay ;
Falling and rising in dell and through dingle,
In alley and valley they mingle and tingle :
Nearer they come like the plunging tide—
He hears their bridles ring as they ride,
Closing upon him from regions wide ;
Till he stands mid the echoes that girdle him round
Like an isle in a weltering sea of sound.
But the prince unheedingly standeth still,
Peering into the visionless rill.
Yet never again, in that mirror clear,
Did those mysterious eyes appear :
They had flashed on the prince, and kindled a fire
On an altar of unworn desire,
Whose sacred flame grew sweet and keen
The more that the face no more was seen—

Or only seen by the sensitive eye
That sees the unrisen moon in the sky.

.

He wandered where, under the northern star,
The bright borealian splendour flashes ;
He searched where the capes and the long fiords are,
And many a river of Denmark dashes ;
And there, like a lily, with lilies round her,
In the midst of her lily-maids he found her ;
And wooing and winning, to his soul he bound her ;
Then airily, cheerily,
He sang so merrily :—

O BONNIE bee, didst ever see
A flower so sweet as this ?
Didst ever sip, with dainty lip,
From such a bloom of bliss ?

O lark that thrills beyond the hills,
In spots of blue, dawn-riven,

Didst ever hear a voice so clear
Mid all the songs of heaven?

O light that burns from molten urns,
In June's delicious air,
Canst thou outshine, with beam divine,
Her coils of golden hair?

O sea that smiles round emerald isles,
In humming waves of peace,
Canst match her eye, more blue than sky
Of Persia or of Greece?

O snow that falls on mountain walls,
Hast thou a soul as white
As this sweet maiden's, child of Eden's
Green garden of delight?

Nor lark, nor bee, nor light, nor sea,
Nor snow o'er deserts driven,
Can match my pride, my love, my bride,
My life, my soul, my heaven!

Hercules.

WAS born in Greece, of godlike kin,
A curly boy with tawny skin ;
With mighty fingers on his fists,
And rings of fat around his wrists ;
 With sinewy arm and brawny limb—
No mortal child could equal him.

What time the silvery globes of dew
Died in the dawn-gleam flashing new,
This wondrous boy of golden Greece
Slept with the rose and palm of peace ;
 All sweetness breathing in his breath,
Nor in his soul one dream of death.

Yet through the green leaves where he lay
A snake voluminous slid his way,

And reared above the beauteous head
The fang of fire that doomed him dead :
 Just then, between the thought and spring,
 A rose-leaf fluttered like a wing.

Then oped the lad his starlike eyes,
Beheld the snake with no surprise ;
But clutched it in the fatal breath,
And flung it forth a thing of death :
 Then with the rose, beneath the palm,
 He laid him down in glorious calm.

Thus Hercules, the babe, began
His labours in the cause of man ;
For many a beast and rogue he slew,
In valour growing as he grew,—
 Behests of Jupiter obeying,
 Alike in saving as in slaying.

The Arena.

WITHIN a ring of fiery eyes
A solitary Christian stood ;
And muffled came the lions' cries,
Stern, grumbling through their dreams of blood.
This man—as notable a pest
As ever spurned the gods of Rome—
Would not allow the Romans rest ;
But plied the basest and the best
With the Lord Christ, like one possesst,
And would not hide him in his home.

They took him to the judgment-seat—
They might have ta'en a Roman stone ;
He would not budge, although they beat ;
He smiled when common men would groan.

They broke one arm—his face was calm ;

They broke another—low and sweet

He oped his lips in prayer and psalm,

As if the air was breathing balm,

Soft blowing through that tender palm

Where Christ reposed His weary feet.

“Away with him !” went forth the cry ;

“Recant !” the milder judges said.

“Nay, Romans, would you have me lie ?”

“Enough, blasphemer, thou art dead !”

“Poor fools ! ye think to conquer me !

I vanquish you ! Your evil fame

Shall wither in the truth made free,

When all the isles, of every sea,

Shall break from Rome to Christ, and ye

Shall rot within your tombs of shame !”

And so, within that glaring ring

Of Roman faces, calm he stood :

He felt the winnowing of a wing,

Which gave him peace in plenitude ;

And he became entranced, like one
Who swoons into a happy land,
After a mighty work is done,
And life's mysterious threads are spun,
And some new day has just begun
To flow from God's creative hand.

A Falling Blow.

THE blow is falling ! Let it fall ;
Even death were no calamity ;
God wot, why should we whine or call ;
It cannot hurt our souls at all,
Since we are free.

A little less of earthly things ;
Less favour of the world have we :
What then, proud man ? The rede still rings,
'Tis not the crown that maketh kings,
But being free.

Then let the blow fall ! what if it
Should lay us flat, both you and me ?

O Lord of wings ! give us the wit
To soar heaven-high though low we sit,
Content and free !

To toil, to suffer, live unknown,—
What matter, if brave men we be?
Why, we can live without a groan,
And dying, make the grave a throne,
Forever free !

Archie.

THEY have laid thee low, they have happed thy
face

From winter's cold and summer's grace ;
Thou art silent now, thou wilt not speak,
Though one should touch thee on the cheek,
And ask thee to arise and smile
As thou wert wont to do erewhile.
What matter? We remember thee—
A man of genial wit and glee ;
For many and many a time hast thou
Lit hope upon a comrade's brow,
And made despair slink off like night
Before the morn's first flush of light,
While thou thyself wert crushed with pain
That clouded life and made it vain.

Now thou art dead—as dying goes—
And ended are thy human woes :
Close in the mantle of the mould
Thy wearied dust is rapt and rolled.
Dead?—No !—Thou art alive ! and death,
The envious catcher of the breath,
Though laying thee within the tomb,
Hath helped thee to a higher doom,
Within a starry-mansioned clime,
Beyond the turbulence of time.
Dear soul, thou liv'st in living beams,
We in a wilderness of dreams,
Wherethrough we wander wide and far,
Still searching for the Pilot-Star,
By whose sweet light thy steps were led
To the Eternal Fountain-head.

The Tragedy of the Nightingale.

BLITHE morning blushed upon the summer hills,
And all the forest minstrels sang with glee,
Save one poor Wren: within the covert she,
Ambushed by one green leaf, heard all the rills
Babbling like wine-steeped tongues, and all the
notes

That swarmed keen revelling from joy-tipsied throats,
And yet herself, sole sitting on a twig,
Tipt here and there with curious spear and sprig,
Gave utterance to no touch of melody:
Forlornest vision ever man did see!
Surely a subtle grief consumed her breast:
Had some uncivil beast despoiled her nest?
Or had a flashing feather lured her mate
To sweet perdition? Moodily still she peered

About the forest, like a soul whom fate
Had marked for desolation, till there neared
A soft-winged bird of unobtrusive hue,
Coming like twilight the green branches through :
This was the Nightingale, to whom belonged
The ministry of peace to all the wronged,
To whom the Wren had therefore come to find
Ease from the pressure of sore heart and mind.

He looked at the lone Wren : then with a tongue
Whose lightest cadences were magic, strung
With melody that healeth misery,
He questioned the small creature of her woe,
And why she had forsook the company
Whose merriment did shake the forest so ?

Uplifting tragic lids, the dismal Wren
Scanned the dim Nightingale, so soft of note,
And trustfully told him all her wretched ken—
How she had been deserted by her lord
For wing more garish—for a voluble throat
That severed the silence like a singing sword,
And lured him over to the choral crew,
Whose music sickened her.

The Nightingale,

In whom the moonlight and the moon-born dew
Had wrought all heavenly sweetness, heard the
tale

Of the poor Wren, like one who suffers pain
Even more when others suffer, than when he
Thrills the pale rose with his own agony,
Wrung from the baffled heart and wildered brain.
“Little it is to say,” quoth he, “that thou
Art not alone in pain. Yet night and day,
Even in sweet valleys, lit with lily-gleam ;
Where roses breathe their odours to the moon ;
Where laurel twinkles on the victor’s brow ;
Where proud men triumph, or where virgins pray ;
Where bride and bridegroom, claspt in nuptial dream,
From trance to trance of tender rapture swoon—
There looms pale sorrow, potent though unseen,
Touching all visions, so that, soon or late,
The spirit that only saw outside the screen
Of happy hue that hid the flints of fate,
Now sees behind it ; and awakes to feel
The solid world beneath him rock and reel,

And find the glory of the heart's romance
Shattered, as seemeth, by the storms of chance.
Yet pause awhile, unhappy Wren, and think.
Here standing, as thou deem'st, on the imminent
brink

Of the dim river that bears all away
Into the wan-skied realm where dawns no day,
Thou seest but disenchantment, and thy heart,
In which desertion rankles like a dart,
Bleeds with the final stab, as seems to it.
But these are errors, born of homely wit.
There is no chance in aught. Whatever comes
Is winged with love; and even the saddest sums
Of grief and death are glorious to the soul
That sees the farthest issues of the whole.
Calamities, so-named, are forms of weal.
Serenely wheels the world, though tempests peal
Annihilation : firmly holds the word
That visioned forth the far-off perfect bird ;
Still potent, luminous, and procreant,
Through flowering seasons, without pause or pant,
Work the celestial wonder-wights that mould,

Out of all seething essences, the plant—
The root, the stem, the leaf, the bud, the bloom,
Form, faculty, and function, and the soul
That tops the highest like a dome of gold,
The temple and the citadel of doom.
'Tis the blurred eye that sees but clouds of sorrow,
While the clear orb, spying the gleamy goal,
Knows that divine solution comes to-morrow—
Or some near date—on winnowy winging time,
With tender song's consolatory chime.
Therefore, dear Wren, be comforted—nor think,
Because thy mate prefers a lawless wing,
That all creation leans o'er ruin's brink.
His baseness be thy greatness to endure,
And by endurance to grow strong and pure."

Here, suddenly, the forest ceased to sing,
And a wild wing-surge throbbed amid the green;
And ere the little tit could cheep or wink,
The witless warblers rushed into the scene—
Made curious by the gracious tones of balm,
Whose sweetness soothed the Wren's relentless pain.
All melody was strangled in their throats;

And then, instead of chanting love's high psalm,
Making the branches hum harmonious notes,
And charming earth with showers of singing rain,
Their passion, blinding reason, made them screech
Like fallen angels grown to apes in speech.
They mocked the Nightingale, who calmly stood,
And eyed them as they chattered in the wood,
Which so re-echoed with their shameful din,
That the quaint, sinless folk who dwelt therein
Were startled in their cells, where they had lain
Drinking the Nightingale's delicious strain,
And now came rushing forth to hear and see
What the unwonted babblement might be.
The flustered mouse keeked from his mossy pillow,
A ghost of ruin mirrored in his e'e;
The brindled snail, housed by a quiet willow,
Oozed from his spiral palace one small horn,
As babes might thrust their fists into the morn
To grasp at thunderclaps. The dainty squirrel—
True gardener of the empire surely born—
Hiding an acorn for his winter store,
Paused in his labour, nor remembered more,

His antique brain received so strange a whirl :
And so the acorn, dreaming of the seas,
Grows to a sapling oak, and takes the breeze,
Like the brave battle-ship it will become
After the wounded years have wept their flood,
Presaging penalties of woe and blood.
The rabbit from his burrow edged an ear
And eye of wonder, tremulous with fear ;
For never had he heard before or seen
Such impious measures in the forest green.
The jolly bee, wide-plunging merrily home,
Staggered, astonished ; and, before he knew,
Though quite within three flower-calls of his comb,
Spilt his sweet burden—honey-globes like dew—
Which a sly tomtit, seeing, speedily sipt,
And through the greenery of the dingle dipt.
Just then an orb of spines in that same place
Moved duskily ; and, pausing for a space,
Pushed from its under-rim a timid snout,
And blinked, and listened to the jangling rout,
Which pierced the hedgehog's silent soul like screams
That rend a household at the hour of dreams—

As when some hooded horror stalks abroad
Red-handed, strangling the melodious god.

Meanwhile, the Nightingale, from leafage dim,
Like one who listens to a subtle hymn
That sings itself within him, eyed the throng,
The gladsome tumult of whose earlier song
Had changed to vulgar rage, and sweetly spake :
“Good fellow workers of the field and brake,
What means this wonderful abandonment
Of all your wonted music? Why should ye
Break thus so rudely on this Wren and me?
The injured bird for consolation came,
And I consoled her. Is there any blame?
What will the Master think, when, from the
blue,

He bends His glorious head in love to you—
To list the service which 'twas your delight
To send, sweet-passioned, to His golden height,
And hears, instead of blissful thrills and shocks,
A monstrous jumble of insulting mocks?
Have ye been feeding on that fatal seed
That clouds the soul of music—and, indeed,

Wrecks the pure heart of love, and gives to life
More grief and madness than assassin's knife?"

Then one bold bird, his songcraft turned to spite,
Jeered at the Nightingale with all his might,
And hinted dubious things, and screeched a lie
That made the sun blush in the guiltless sky.
The very wingless creatures in the grass
Hid their small eyes for shame, and sighed "Alas!"
It burned their hearts to think that their sweet friend
Should so be slandered, to some hateful end—
That friend who all the summer nights had made
A very heaven within the darkling glade;
Whose earnest melodies brought forth a face
From every root, and bud, and bloom of grace,
Till all the forest, like a single ear,
Leaned to the flowing voice divinely clear;
And ever would have listened, but that dawn
Would send a courier, like a timid fawn,
Whose visionary gleam would break the spell,
And send each creature to its pensive cell.
Another bird put murder in the tale,
By setting forth against the Nightingale

That sinfullest sin which is the crowning ill
Of conduct, in all sweet society ;
And darkened the indictment with such skill
As quickly banished all dubiety,
And made conviction, smouldering like a fire,
Blaze into execution.

Then was done
The saddest, cruellest deed beneath the sun—
Of later wrongs the most unrighteous sire !
They fell upon the moon's bard, soul of song,
And tore him wing from wing, and flung him low
Among the shuddering grass, that wept for long
Red tears of inextinguishable woe.
A cry of anguish through the forest went,
Wrung from the heart of nature. Each thing bent
A pained and reverent head : the lowliest weed
Revealed a heart that could both beat and bleed ;
The star-companioned oak, storm-beat in vain,
Shivered through all his limbs, and breast, and brain,
Drooping and moaning in colossal pain ;
And that rose tree, from whose sweet bosom oft,
As from a fount, had flowed, moon-crazed and soft,

His thrilling streams of dewy poesy,
Sighed all that day and night till near the dawn :
But the white moon, from whom the bird had drawn
His nightly inspiration, wept great tears
As from the sorrows of a thousand years ;
While all the stars, companions of the moon,
And also minions of old melody,
Veiled their bright brows, as in a tender swoon,
At sight of the eternal tragedy—
In which, from age to age, the noblest fall,
Though not to die, but triumph over all ;
Live in repentant minds ; and thenceforth be
The pilot-souls of clouded misery.
Then the slow dawn that, like a folded rose,
Had felt in dreams the sorrows of the night,
Oped her wet eyes mid dolorous gleams of light,
With no blithe welcome from the pipes of those
Who should have blown across the brightening
scene
A gale of music, as before a queen
Who comes to liberate the world, and be
Sole sovereign of the beautiful and free.

Whence this cold silence? Where the brimming
throats

That late like fountains burst in jubilant notes,
Making the green land merry? Where be they
Whose songs gave earnest of perpetual May?
Woe, woe is me! that I should live to tell
The saddest tale that ever woke a knell
Within the tragic bosom of mankind!
It were enough to give to dumb and blind
New faculties—rare powers of speech and sight,
Wherewith to blast into unending night
Those envious murdersongs of field and space;
Who, finding in pure Philomel a grace
Beyond the reaches of their tensest art,
Smote into silence earth's divinest heart.
And now the mangled bird lay stark and cold
Among the bleeding leaves; and by his corse
Sat the wing-ruffled genius of remorse,
The small dim Wren, by one fierce thought made old—
That she alone had wrecked that heart of gold.

At first no other bird was heard or seen,
Piping or twinkling through the leafy green:

All living things were mute in earth and air,
Voiceless in shame, or hopeless in despair.
But from a grassy knoll at length there sprang
One volant spirit to the sun, and sang
A beauteous song, that proved one heart at least
Was innocent of envy and of blood.
It was the Lark, dear heaven's melodious priest,
Who drenched the valleys with a sacred flood.
In those clear tones, so pure, and true, and wise,
The murderers heard the judgment of the skies—
For holy tones are judgments unto those
Whose hearts and souls are scarred by evil deeds
Done to the innocent. Then there arose
In those still sanctuaries of woods and weeds
Intonings faint of pain and penitence
From all the birds, upon whose darkened sense
The Lark had flashed new light, till they could see
The Nightingale's unstained divinity.

Soon from his airy temple dropped the Lark
In gentle lapses, tunable and sweet :
But as he neared the woodland's fatal mark,
Where music's tenderest heart had ceased to beat,

His own heart well-nigh burst, and in his throat
His broken song became a sobbing note ;
For there the precious ruin lay of him,
The starry melodist—his bright eye dim—
Who late had watched the gentle planets bloom
In heaven, like roses in the odorous gloom
Of garden bowers, and wreathed them in his song
To ease the world of many a woe and wrong.

“Dead! Dead! yet all the feathered fools have
life!”

So mourned the Lark beside his quiet friend :
Yet suddenly his prophet-note grew strong—
“O sorrow, cease thy plaint! Successful strife,
Bred of mean thought, hath yet a meaner fate,
In stark oblivion of its deed and date ;
While patient love’s most shattered harmony,
Born in defeat and failure, cannot die ;
But lives and ripens through the storms of time,
And weaves itself in heaven’s eternal chime.
Death cannot snatch the soul, song-winged from birth,
Nor touch with fear the heavenly tempered will,
Nor shake love’s holy altar from the earth :

The very dust of love is vocable ;
A voice from out the ashes will arise,
And thrill all hearts with knowledge of the skies."

So sang the Lark ; then listened—eager—still—
And all the birds, astonished, flitted near,
The sudden wonder of the wood to hear ;
For from the dead-cold dust of Philomel
Came a low murmur, like a last farewell
Blown from an unseen orb at evening's close :
A sweet, low voice—the odour of a rose—
Touching fine sense like music, such as thrills
The soul that triumphs over secret ills :
"Farewell, O comrades of the sylvan lyre,
Who feed song's altar with celestial fire.
Farewell ! I am not dead, and shall not die,
But live in all things fair in earth and sky.
From this charmed nook, where I was wont to sing,
I fly, enlarged ; and now no finite ring,
The dream of bounded knowledge without grace,
Defines the limits of my dwelling-place
Within the temple of the undefined :
In sun, and moon, and star ; in spicy wind

That wafteth India o'er the summer sea ;
In all sweet flowers, in every forest tree ;
In joy and sorrow, in high thought and deed ;
In golden pipings of the wood and mead ;
And in your very visions I shall be
To kindle love, and song, and deity.—
Farewell ! Farewell ! ”

So passed the voice away
Into the ample azure of the day :
The voice of no avenger, but of one
Whose heart doth pity the worst evils done
In storms of passion, born of ignorance,
That rush on agonies of fierce mischance.

A sweeter calm now fell upon the wood ;
A consecration on the solitude.
Where grisly horror stalked but yestereve,
Making the simple wood-folk quake and grieve,
Now paced mild peace and faith and hope ; and they,
Circling the minstrel's ashes, hummed soft tunes
Learned from the Nightingale in wondrous Junes,
When love came reeling from the arms of May,
And plunged into the forest, where he lay,

Listening and dreaming till the dawn of day.
Then from his pine-tree dropped the shadowy Rook,
And made a grave within the greenest nook,
Beneath the rosebush where, on many a night
Pouring the starry magic of his mind,
The bard had soothed the soul of hapless wight
Sent sighing homeward by a maid unkind.
With leaves and moss the silent sexton lined
The sylvan tomb, then paused, as who should say—
“Dead, bury your dead, and let us haste away!”
And so they made a bier of twigs and stalks—
The melancholy anguished penitents,
And bore their songless victim to his place,
Each with a cloud of shame upon his face.
And sadly through the dim and devious walks
Came from their cells the woodland innocents,
Wool-footed, tearful-hearted,—lovers all
Of him who lay beneath his leafy pall,
Sweet heart, high soul, true liegebard to the moon.
Little they deemed that he should die so soon,
And leave no equal voice in all the earth,
By wood or wild, or any human hearth.

Quietly they laid him down ; and on his breast
The poor dead Wren : leaf hidden in one nest,
Softly they wrapped them round ; and there they lie
Sweetening the rosebuds and the tender sky.
Then rose the Lark and sang,

“O more than Sage !

O Prophet-singer of the golden age
That lingers like a bride, but yet shall come
To strike with beauty all our follies dumb,
Sleep in thy dust, yet triumph in thy soul,
That we may triumph over death and dole !
Descend among us from thy airy height,
And heal our discords with thy song of light ;
Make us thy temple for a while, and be
The kindler of great-thoughted melody.
Fulfil thy promise !—linger not !—be still
The moulder of our wildly-wandering will
To purposes that, springing from the heart,
Shall branch to heaven in beauteous blooms of art,
And musically kiss the stars, and bring
To all the world a more celestial spring !”

The Ring.

O BLITHESOME ring, O winsome ring,
That Willie gied to me,
As doon thy glen, dear Moneymore,
We wandered to the sea:
For we had come by Drumodune,
The rills o' Toranree
That croon amang the green breckan,
And the blaeberric.

And saft and coothie were the words
He coo'd into my ear,
Like wafts o' heavenly win' that blaw
When nane but love can hear:
And sweet and sweeter grew the kiss
For miles he gied to me,

As we gaed through the green breckan
And the blaeberry.

Then in the glen o' Moneymore,
Where the brown waters sing,
He took my hand and fondly bound
My finger wi' a ring :
O winsome ring, O blithesome ring
That Willie gied ~~me~~^{to} me,
As we gaed through the green breckan,
And the blaeberry.

I wear the ring, my Willie's ring ;
It clasps me like his arms ;
His heart beats in it warm and sweet,
And keeps my life frae harms :
And still it shines, and sae I ken
That he'll come hame to me,
And kiss me mang the green breckan,
And the blaeberry.

Love and War.

HE crossed the mountain path alone,
 Quick-radiant as the tender morn;
 He woo'd me by the altar-stone,
 Where all our vows were sworn :
 I heard the lark sing round his nest ;
 I heard—from love's divine eclipse—
 His breast was burning on my breast,
 His lips upon my lips !
 We wandered slowly down from heaven,
 To mortal marriage and its glee ;
 But war leapt out of hell, and stole
 My lord from me.

Wild clarions shook the commonweal ;
 The legions of the land arose ;

They swept like glancing streams of steel,
To smite the nation's foes.
I saw the hosts at early morn,
Wind southward in their bearded might,
I heard the giggling bugle-horn
Laugh at the drum's delight.
I held the stirrup for his foot,
The best in that bright company;
One word, one kiss, and then he flashed
Like life from me.

Night gloomed like prison walls between
Each sorrowful succeeding day:
Day only showed that night had been,
And sunless passed away.
Far echoes of the battle came
Across the darkly shuddering heights,
Like voiceless tongues of sudden flame
That thrill December nights.
Oft heard I in my dismal trance,
Sobs of a heart in misery;

I started—but no soul was there
Save only me.

Came one at length with trembling pace,
And fearful speech, and wandering eye;
A thousand deaths were in his face,
And one poor victory!
Another and another came,
With mangled limb or bleeding breast,
Who blew new-kindled fires of fame,
Of heroes gone to rest;
Then came the shattered legions home,
To lovers waiting wistfully:
But oh, dear Lord, *he* never came
To comfort me!

I knew not if I waked or slept
That weary, weary, woeful night;
But this I know—I never wept—
My eyes were dry as light:
Yet in a trance I seemed to thread
The horrors of the battle plain;

I found my hero cold and dead
Above the conquered slain :
And then he seemed to be alive ;
I clasped him—oh how tenderly !—
'Twas but his ghost that soothed my arms—
God pity me !

Say not, say not, 'twas years ago !
To me it seems but yesterday :
Eternity is in my woe,
And will not pass away.
I wander on the dreary slope
Which blossomed then, though days were dim ;
But all things died with love's one hope—
Maybe they bloom with him :
Why do I live when life is naught,
When time itself has ceased to be ?
Take me, O God, or let him come
To comfort me !

The Message.

SING, birdie, sing, and tell me true
What notes of cheer you bring to me
From that sweet isle amid the blue,
The dreamlike humming sea?
Sing, birdie—did he sigh or smile,
My pilgrim, in his Indian isle?

Sing, birdie! Did he kiss your wings,
And bid you bear the kiss to me?
And did he murmur tender things
Unto the tender sea?
O birdie, did he moan or sing,
My beautiful, my brave sea-king?

Blithe birdie! lilt, and lilt again,
I know that still he loveth me:

Thy voice is his, so sweet the pain
That thrills me like the sea—
And gives me wings to find afar,
The rapture of the morning star.

Fly, birdie, fly, and bear to him
This kiss, this swelling heart, from me ;
And fill thy throat until it brim
Like high tide on the sea ;
Then sing as if my love were thine—
Earth's only soul, and that divine !

The Prisoned Eagle.

O SHAME! to bind the sun-king like a slave!
To drag him from the crystal sphere of heaven,
And shut him in so mean and base a den,
That every wingless fool who stares and blinks,
May take the measure of his majesty!

But man's is not the victory! Behold
The regal gleam of his untrembling eye,
Far searching through the sunblaze, and the blue
Of the free, roofless heavens, that cannot hold
The boundless speculation of his soul,
Which shoots beyond these regions, wonder-borne,
To Saturn rolling in his gleaming rings,
Or Jupiter flying with his silvery moons.

There is no sign of sorrow in that eye,

But the stern patience of a throneless god
Brooding on fate that binds, but cannot slay
The spirit that inspires the immortal will
To live a noble life in little space.
Thine was a life of freedom and of joy :
Thou didst receive the ministries of nature—
A monarch in thy crystalline dominion ;
The voices of the elements to thee
Were sweet as lullabies of whispered love.
Oft have I seen thee on the bristling back
Of the black tempest, hurrying down the heavens,
Amid the lightning-hiss and thunder-clap,
Calm, yet determined, like a beakéd fate,
Whose will is equal to all possible doom !
To have known such wide enfranchisement, it were
No wonder now should rage bestorm thy mind,
And grief gnaw out thy heart : for oh, too oft,
Is greatness tumbled from its throne, discrowned
By meanest spite and small unregal powers,
And made a ruin and a theme for pity.
Kings are oft subject to an abject power,
And even the best are servants to the worst.

But thou art not discrowned, O monarch bird :
No, nor cast down ! Thy heart is still uncracked ;
They could not measure thee who bound thee so :
New kingdoms hast thou conquered, and become
Master, where thousands would have crawled as
slaves,

Even to the doors of death. Thy soul is thine !—
A kingdom mightier than material spheres !

Sir James Outram.

BURY him deep in immortal dust,
In the solemn Min-ster's silent aisle ;
His soul is with the brave and just,
Beyond the moth and the stealthy rust—
Close menials of slow time and toil :
O bury him in the precious soil ;
But keep, O England, his fame in trust !

His tender mother nor dreamed nor guessed
That he should travel the perilous brine ;
And battle through many a scene unblessed,
To crush with the sword that monstrous pest,
Which, fierce and cruel and undivine,
Filled many a bosom with mortal pine,
For murder done on the bravest and best.

But the hero heard that shriek of woe,
That woke despair in the soul of peace;
So he went—he could not choose but go,
For the true knight's foot is never slow—
And he smote the pest with a swift decrease
Till the healing stars found sweet release,
And smiled on the outraged land below.

Yet not from the vaster deeds of death
Alone doth the hero's glory rise:
O, rich with fame is the peaceful breath
Which wisely and calmly he murmureth
Mid the babble of human hates and lies.
Sir James's sword was a sharp surprise;
But his counsels reared new walls of faith.

Then home he came with a deadly taint,
Slow-coiling within each fatal vein:
Yet dying, he breathed no weak complaint,
But like a heroical, silent saint,
He hushed the moan of his mortal pain,
And died as if death were laurelled gain,
And the praises of men vain dreams and faint.

So gather around the warrior's bier,
Ye mourners ! and lay him softly down ;
While sadly, as from a tender sphere,
The wail of the organ wakes the tear
For the chief renowned beyond renown :
Full sweet are the wreaths of his greener crown,
In the bloom of God's one golden year !

The Sultan.

HE looked across the Golden Horn
Where, flaming like a god new born,
Arose the morn.

"Thus I arise!" the Sultan said,
"An empire's glory on my head;
While at my feet the infidel
Crawls, smitten by great Allah's spell;
And from his throne the Prophet smiles
On all our toils."

At eve, with calm believing eyes,
He saw within the friendly skies
The crescent rise.

"Thus I arise!" the Sultan said,
"A starry empire on my head;
And though around the world my foe

Threatens, strong Allah works him woe ;
Invincible I stand, but he
 Shall waste and flee."

But, silent sandalled, to him stole
A spirit, showing him a roll
 Bearing a scroll :
"I shall arise !" the writing ran
"To right the bleeding wrongs of man ;
And ye who would not do it must,
Inglorious, sink into the dust."
A darker line the Sultan read,
 And bowed his head.

Again upon the Golden Horn
Godlike arose the golden morn,
 Nor touched with scorn ;
Though stark within the palace lay
One little heap of jewelled clay ;
And surging near, unheard by him,
The war-storm ruined, fierce and grim,
Breaking the empire far and wide—
 The Sultan's pride !

The Cabin Boy.

I.

UPON the bridge, at silvery break of day
I stood, and saw a solitary bark
Move from her moorings in the harbour dark :
Silent and spectral in the shadowy gray
Towered the great masts, and flung their pennons gay.
Among the sailors, cheerily as a lark
Whistled a cabin boy, an elfin spark,
Newly apprenticed to the fearful spray.
He stalked about and watched the brightening beams
Kiss the top-gallant with a golden tone
That winged his fancy to romantic skies,
Where pearly isles made music in his dreams :
He sniffed the gales that murmur round Ceylon :
While all the Indies flashed within his eyes.

II.

Unhalting wheeled the inevitable year :
And once again upon the bridge I paced
Beside a mother, sad, prophetic faced,
Each sea gust making misery in her ear.
Behind us hummed the city ; and more near
The harbour rustled with the windy masts.
Then lo ! a ship rushed in before the blasts,
A battered phantom of the pitiless sea—
The same proud bark that, one brief year ago,
Bore to the gleaming dreamlands of the East
That beauteous boy. “O captain, where is he?”
“By sapphire isles the fairies of the yeast
Loved him, and took him down the emerald flow,
On their soft bosoms, to a marriage feast !”

Parting.

LINGER, dearest, yet awhile :

Courage, though fierce fate is calling :
Give me one eternal smile,
While the mortal dew is falling.

Linger—let us hold this hour

Sacred to the unreturning :
Know my passion, know thy power,
Know the heart thou leavest burning !

If we must not meet again,

Through the windings of our story,
One last moment soothe my pain,
On my bosom lay thy glory.

Never till this saddest kiss—

Saddest, though a heaven of sweetness—
Have I known the balm, the bliss,
Of thy beautiful completeness.

All my soul is filled with thee,
And, like splendour-teeming ocean,
Throbs with tides of ecstasy,
Tempests of divine emotion.

O the curse of time and art,
O the curse of human fashion,
That could see us heart to heart,
Yet so wreck our spotless passion!

Nay, my love,—I bless the fate
That so tenderly revealed thee:
Not ignobly loved, though late,
O my loss, had fate concealed thee!

Hark!—The bleeding hour hath come,
Cuts our twining souls asunder:

But nor life nor death may sum
Of our love the orbéd wonder !

O this utter sting of time !—
Death were bliss, if both were dying :
Golden were our funeral chime,
We in one sweet shadow lying.

Weeping !—Weep thy precious tears :
Haply, they shall soothe thy sadness :
Mine is dry as fire, nor years
Shall assuage the smouldering madness.

Farewell !—this one kiss—the last !—
God ! the joy and sorrow-giver,
Give us all the woe thou hast,
But O part us not for ever !

A Blind Portess.

DEAR heart, when last I saw thy face,
A twilight of poetic grace,
I dreamt not that the total night
Of blindness would unstar thy sight,
And hold thee darkling till thine eyes
Opened on Heaven's divine surprise.
So, when they told me thou wert hid
As in a torchless pyramid,
My heart leapt up to God for thee,
Blinded in thy antiquity.

For my own life was tuned to sadness
By strokes of death and fortune's madness.
Defeat in life is worse than death,
I thought; and as I quelled my breath,

Stung into bitter reticence,
And scorn of even just self-defence,
The bowers of heaven swung o'er mine eyes
Their gleams of starry rosaries,
And from their cool recesses flung
Sounds as from God's authentic tongue :
In vain ! The woody harmony ;
The tidal marches of the sea ;
Sunrise and sunset, and the dreams
That flicker in their cloudier beams ;
The smiles of women, and the smiles
Of children in their playful toils ;
And man the conqueror of man,
Startling the world with plan on plan,
Binding the scattered isles in one,
Catching with art the setting sun,—
Building new empires from the dust
Of others held by bonds unjust—
In vain, in vain were all to me
Brooding in pale despondency,
Wherein, heart pierced, I veiled my head
Envyng the comfortable dead—

A man not wanted by the world,
And half to dull perdition hurled.

But, when thy friend breathed in mine ear,
In words that touched the sense of fear,
That on the twilight of thine age,
Calm as a saintly poet's page,
The night of blindness had descended,
And visible life to thee was ended—
I scorned the baseness of my sorrow,
That still could see each radiant morrow,
And sigh ; while thy all-loving eyes,
So gently-sad and sweetly wise,
Like orbs within the glooms of time
Would ne'er again behold, sublime,
The solemn dawn the grand east whitening,
The rose-eyed morn the mountains bright'ning,
The sun through noon's gold spaces wheeling,
The soft eve down the green glades stealing,
Or night, star-radiant, born benignly,
Pacing the holy heavens divinely.
O friend, how poor in faith was I,

To play the pallid fool, and sigh,
Because, forsooth, ill fortune struck
For once the unsteady hand of luck,
Leaving me prone,—though still unshorn
Of powers wherewith a man is born.
I scorned myself! I thought of thee,
In thy dark infelicity,
And could not poise my heart so well
But that some drops of anguish fell
On the cold cypress in my mind—
Tears blinding me that thou wert blind.

No more, I said, shalt thou behold
The silent snow fall on the wold;
Or in the nooky woodlands see
The spirit of spring's virginity,
The snowdrop, in whose prophet eye,
The finished year doth perfect lie;
Nor soothe thy silent sorrowing
With the glad children of the spring—
The unrepelling buds, the blooms
That waft us to ethereal dooms;

The fond sweet wooing of the birds,
With flutings that are more than words ;
The strong, though priestless marriages,
Nest building within bowers and trees ;
The hopeful brooding, the soft singing ;
The quick'ning life, the spirit springing ;
The nursing till the wings are strong,
And the young throats are tuned to song.
Nor these alone are hid from thee,
Dear nature's orbless devotee !
For never in the mead shalt thou
Hail the evangel of the plough,
Or ever in the sower's face
The Lord of Resurrection trace.
Invisible breather of harmony,
Flushed summer, will pass over thee ;
Autumn will wave his sun-smit hair,
Till corn is golden everywhere,
And jog afield with scythe and hook,
And pile his treasures stook by stook,—
Then drink good-bye at harvest home,
And sunward pass ere winter come :

Yet thou, dear soul, who lov'st him so,
Shalt not behold him come or go.
The wildest winter in his rage
Will do no homage to thine age ;
The mystic tracery of the frost,
The softly wavering, snowy ghost,
That comes on eerily silent wing,
Putting a hush on everything ;
The steel-winged skaters forward trending,
Gleamily curving, interblending,
Whistling cheerily round the bay,
Clanking merrily far away,
Vanishing into pallid spaces,
Hithering with effulgent faces,—
Until the voiceless twilight, slowly
Coming, like mantled melancholy,
Touches the world with stealthy changes,
Shadows the sparkling laky ranges,
And dulls the ice gleam till it glimmer
Under the moonmist, solemnly dimmer ;
And the large bosom of silence closing,
Claspeth all to her own reposing—

All, all, fine bard, must be to thee
Dreams of an old felicity.

But most it chilled my heart that thou
Should'st ne'er again see human brow.
The vision of a new-born child,
With all its future undefiled,
Shall never give thine ancient eye
New glimpses of eternity :
The brightness of a student-boy
Throbbing with intellectual joy,
Deep dreaming over mighty books,
Shall fire no more thy songful looks ;
No young bride's altar-blushes now
Can warm thine own historic brow,
Which moons upon me, as I gaze,
Through tear-clouds of thy tender days ;
Nor shalt thou look on dying eyes,
Sweet with dissolving mysteries,
Wherein, mild-eyed, as in a mist,
Thou might'st behold the dawning Christ ;
And white heaven opening, sphere on sphere,
To God's illimitable year.

Yet cheerly, friend ! I speak not so
To darken thy supream woe.
Thou canst not be what thou hast been,
Nor canst thou see what thou hast seen ;
Yet in thy procreant memory,
Like islands from the brooding sea,
The mornings of the past may press,
As luminous in their loveliness
As when thy honeymoon shone o'er thee,
And life lay sparkling all before thee.
What hast thou lost, if God remain,
And life's pure star within thy brain,
Thy soul, to which thy fluent sweetness
Is as the breath of all completeness?
All, save the soul, is dust or breath,
And finds inevitable death ;
But that eternal spirit gleams
Deathless amid our ruined dreams ;
Lending us thoughts through which to see
The tender heart of mystery,
Sweet glimpses, more consolatory
Than pæans and the palms of glory.

Cheerly, sweet friend ! if thou art blind,
Nor ever more canst see thy kind,
Thou canst not look on deeds impure—
The mean device, the subtle lure ;
The prank, the habit, and the fashion,
That make a murderer of each passion ;
The savage anger of an eye
Whose flash is audible blasphemy :
Nor that unholiest, saddest sight
That blots the gold of Christian light—
A husband beat the sacred brows
Of her he wed with burning vows.
O blind-eyed bard, let God's content
Cheer thee in light's abandonment !
Think that His fingers are the bars
That guard thy vision from the scars,
The stabs, the social tragedies
That sicken our still seeing eyes.
Thou art not half so sad as we,
Who can all visible horror see—
Dark-handed crime ; and, fearfuller still,
The sin-stains of the Christless will,

That knows the right and will not do it,
That sees the wrong yet will pursue it ;
The rich fool's sneer ; official stings ;
The vengeance of tyrannic kings ;
The crucifixions unsublime,
Pawning eternity to time ;
And that black sorrow of our race,
God dying from the human face,
Through the unsphering of the spirit,
Whose throne the foulest fiends inherit.

Yet, can it be that thou art blind
With such fine music in thy mind ?
With such light-streaming words whose rush
Maketh our common language blush ?
With such sweet thoughts whose natural bloom
Gladdens the grandeur of great doom ?
Earth is not blind because 'tis night ;
In other lands the sun is bright :
Thou art not blind : thy hidden eyes
Are turned on more majestic skies.
So, standing on thy seventy years,

Nearer to God and all his spheres,
Blind lady, thou art clearer souled
Than all the plodding world, controlled
By its huge purposes of solid sense
That harden like the Pyramids, and thence
Cast but a shadow, while life's living streams
Roll into being past those desert dreams.

Love's Redemption.

As one long wandering in the gloom of night,
Through shadowy forests which all heaven outbar,
Comes to an open, and beholds one star
Shine dewily with reassuring light,—
So I, who many a day in grievous plight,
Went staggering through the world with many a
scar

And blind, when I beheld thee from afar,
Dawn on me like an angel from thy height,
The shadows vanished: "Love," I cried, "is true
And gracious, pouring sweetness o'er each state;
Yea, God doth love us, though we love or hate.'
Then all my being bloomed to heaven anew,
Under thy sunny smile and eye of dew,
Thou beautiful redeemer of blind fate!

In Prospect of Death.

WHEN I shall die—and be it late or soon—
Let merciful memories be my only shroud.
Think me a light veiled in a mourning cloud ;
Living to knowledge, like a finished moon—
Though nothing here, to other lands a boon :
Nor let my death give triumph to the proud,
By your weak tears : be happy with the crowd
Who, spite of woe, are seldom out of tune.
Wise in the common instinct, be ye glad :
There's some redemption in the doom of death
That cuts us from new sins—sweet mercy's plan.
Yet, if for me you be sincerely sad,
Do this sweet homage to my valued breath—
Ease the sad burden of some living man !

Reaping.

Up, mortal, and act, while the angel of light
 Melts the shadows before and behind thee ;
Snake off the soft dreams that encumber thy might,
 And burst the fool's fetters that bind thee :
Soars the skylark—soar thou ; leaps the stream—do
 thou leap ;
Learn from nature the splendour of action,
Plough, harrow, and sow, or thou never shalt reap ;
Faithful deeds bring divine benefaction.

The red sun has rolled himself into the blue,
 And lifted the mists from the mountain ;
The young hares are feasting on nectar of dew,
 The stag cools his lips in the fountain :
The blackbird is piping within the dim elm,
 The river is sparkling and leaping ;

The wild bee is fencing the sweets of his realm,
And the mighty-limbed reapers are reaping.

To spring comes the budding ; to summer the blush ;
To autumn the happy fruition ;
To winter repose, meditation, and hush ;
But to man every season's condition :
He buds, blooms, and ripens, in action and rest,
As thinker, and actor, and sleeper ;
Then withers and wavers, chin drooping on breast,
And is reaped by the hand of a reaper.

Love and Time.

“TIME is a cripple, Helen dear,
Or laggard, in his cruel spite;
Or how so wearily moves the year
Toward my unfulfilled delight?
O take ye wings, ye lazy hours,
And waft my lover from the south;
And bring the green leaves to the bowers;
And bring, O bring, the flower of flowers,
The rose of roses in his mouth!”

“Nay, Lily, time, unknown to you,
Has grown new wings upon his heel;
He flies with me as ne’er he flew,
And hourly rings a sadder peal.
Your lover comes; but my dear lord
Must hie him to the burning East,

Where, round the jungle-hunting horde,
Shrieks the wild tempest of the sword,
And vultures gather to the feast !”

“But, sister, he’ll come home with speed ;
And bronzed with battle though he be,
There must be glory in the deed
That quells the foemen of the free !
And see, he leaves to fill his place,
His babe that hangs upon your breast—
Young eaglet of a soaring race,
A pure unpurchasable grace—
The tenderest treasure and the best !”

“Wise are your words, and strong and sweet,
Fair Lily mine ; and you shall find,
Though I may hear the war-drum beat,
The trumpet moan upon the wind,—
I can be patient—yea, and bold ;
For less were treason to my love,
My lord,—whose dearest form I fold
In this bright babe, the beauteous-souled,
My warrior brave, my cooing dove !”

Then crooned the sisters to the child,
Who oped his eyes on them and smiled :

Sleep, baby, sleep ! fear no mischance ;
Sleep till the rose anew is born ;
Sleep till Orion leans his lance
Upon the ruddy shores of morn !
Blow, wind of peace, from east to west !
Blue waves, heave home the dancing ship !
Bring wandering wing to baby's nest ;
Bring father's breast to mother's breast ;
And weary, hungering lip to lip !

October.

THE fruits are gathered and the fields are bare,
And nature's sweets begin to waste and wane :
The flowers so beauteous once in wood and lane,
Fall blighted ; yet they feel no cold despair—
They sweetly die whose life is good and fair.
A dreamy silence shrouds the misty plain ;
The hills are veiled in sorrow ; once again
The year is furrowed, and his ravelled hair
Is tossed too rudely by the gusty wind.
And where are now the singers and the songs
So softly soothing to the wearied mind ?
One sound alone, in many a rustic spot,
The minstrel ^{music} ~~sings~~ of the year prolong—
The eerie ripple of the redbreast's note.

The Sun of November.

Low in the south thou smilest in thy flight
One brief, bright flush as of an angel's face ;
Then sweepst on to gleam on larger space,
Leaving the stars to represent thy might,
And the new moon thy ever new delight.
Yet thy swift glance illumines our homely place
With one sweet trance of all the summer's grace,
When skies were blue and fields were daisied white ;
The golden legend on each wrinkled leaf
Takes a new glory from thy hasty beams ;
And desolate hearts, half withered with their grief,
Feel once again the ecstasies of youth
Thrill in the depths of unforgotten dreams—
The poesy of beauty, love, and truth !

December Stars.

Lo ! as the pale year staggers to his doom,
How sweetly glad the stars in heaven are shining !
As if for them there could be no repining
Whoever died and dropped into the gloom :
It may be they are wise, as old, and see
The moanless stream of beauteous mystery
Flowing, though darkly, to eternal bloom,
And unassailable felicity.
Why should they weep above a human tomb,
That only holds the soul's insentient lining ?
Knowing that life is still the lord of death,
The stars for ever chime that all is well :
Men change from mortal to immortal breath ;
And funeral moan is muffled marriage bell.

The Winter Daisy.

THE river flows with hasty flood and keen,
Biting the red earth from the broken ledge :
The dull-eyed sparrow dozes on the hedge,
Dreaming the world is clothed in fruitful green,
And only wakes to hunger and the spleen.
Lean blackbirds dig for grubs with golden wedge ;
The water-hen stares wildly from the sedge,
Half crazed that not a minnow can she glean
Within her wonted pool. I, too, am crosst,
And wander like an unforgiven ghost
In the dank meadow by the whirling stream,
Seeking redemption. Lo, the holy sign !
A half-blown daisy lends her patient gleam,
And all the world is clothed in light divine !

Pelagius the Heretic.

Now the Fifth Century of the Lord had dawned,
And many lands were quickened into light
By reason of the mild Redeemer star
That, glowing from the Nazarenian heavens,
Had dimmed the Pagan planets in their spheres ;
And, leaning o'er the billows of vast seas,
Woo'd the far islands from the savage flood,
Into the light-stream flowing from the fount
Of Christ's sweet heart. At that same stroke of
time,

A subtle controversy shook the church,
From Carthage to the Caledonian woods.
Great were the combatants ; and still their names
Shine in the shadowy records of the church :
Still are the questions vexed for which they fought ;

And ever from the diverse ranks of men
Spring forth Pelagius and Augustine,
And fight their battles o'er with modern tongue.

Pelagius was a Briton, born in Wales,
Or Caledonia, land of brooding minds ;
A portly man, of sweet mild temperament,
Untainted by the grossness of the world,
Or the fierce passions that becloud the soul.
Nursed in a holy solitude, he lived
In calm communion with eternal things.
He saw the ample goodness of his God,
The presence of His glory, everywhere.
Proclamatory Nature spake His truth.
The sweet recurrences of night and day
Were oracles of beauty and delight ;
The undelaying seasons, spirit-winged,
Chimed like four angels, at whose music, earth
Turned softly in her silent sphere, and dreamed
Four visions, flashed from souls of melody ;
And in the flowing centuries he saw
God moving to His triumphs. Then, in man,

Majestic in divine similitude,
He saw the angel shining through the flesh,
A spirit immortal in a mortal shape,
And still immortal in its destiny,
God-made, God-piloted, and God-redeemed.

The lenient mind propounds the lenient faith :
So good Pelagius, pure in thought and deed,
Easy, and visionful, and bright of soul,
Denied hereditary guilt, and taught
That our first parents' sins were theirs alone,
And not entailed on their posterity ;
That new-born children are immaculate,
And innocent as Adam ere he sinned ;
But that the growth of human faculty
Is marred by evil arts, and blasting winds
Of evil fortune ; so that tender hearts,
Who else might shine unspotted until death,
Are foiled ere knowledge ripens into power
To temper passion or repel deceit.
See how the subtle-tongued Cœlestius,
Disciple of Pelagius, put the case :

“Man may be sinless if he only will,
 For will is free, and freedom argues power ;
 Sin, if inevitable, is not sin ;
 Nor wrong in man, if unavoidable.
 Let man be sinless, for as man he ought :
 But if he ought, God’s will is that he can :
 No obligation binds the powerless soul.”

But furthermore, Pelagius taught that Christ
 Lived, and revealed, and suffered for mankind,
 Not a mere faction ; that the after-life
 Is not an earthly country, boundaried
 By legal lines, o’er which no soul dare move
 Without some priestly passport ; but a place,
 If place it be, illimitable as God :
 And that each soul, repenting, as each may—
 Having within itself repenting power,—
 May win salvation, enter Heaven, and be
 Immortal as the sinless Seraphim.

These were the visions of Pelagius.
 Yet taught he also that, who taketh Christ,

Should have the aidance of the Holy Ghost,
In building the slow grandeur of a life
Unto the sweet sublimity of death,
Through which we pass, as in a sudden dream,
To God's eternal waking, one with Christ.

To combat these alluring heresies,
(For heresies they seemed to sterner minds)
Leapt Augustine into the fray, and fought
For God Almighty's darker mysteries,
For reason's limitations, and poor man's
Impossible redemption without grace.

Man's life is oft the fountain of his thoughts :
Nursed by the molten suns of Africa,
The soul of Augustine was tropic flame :
Volcanic passion swelled his kingly heart,
Which, in his morn of unconverted youth,
Burst into monstrous visions of desire
That whipped him into hells of unbelief.
At length God's light within his conscience flashed,
While pale remorse hung cloud-like in his mind

As a wan curtain shows terrific shapes
Towering within a burning theatre,
Reflecting the huge evils of his life.
Then he awoke, a fire-renewéd man,
And gave himself to Christ ; and till his death,
Opened to man the oracles of God,
Smote at all heretics of every hue,
Pelagians, Manichæans, Donatists ;
And while the ruthless Genseric with his hordes
Wasted Numidian, Mauritanian fields,
And like a snake the walls of Hippo ringed
In cruel siege, the saint went home to God
Ere yet his country, by the Vandal doomed,
Beyond all resurrection fell with Rome.

Scarred by the fierce realities of sin ;
Learned in the subtle fiends that torture man—
The undiviner bias of the will :
The bitter sweets of passion ; and the hate,
That, murdering love, doth pierce the sinless flesh
Of Christ, and from all human vision plucks
The living glory of the living God—

Rose Augustine like one from death and hell,
A brand of grace. Thus came he greatly skilled
In threading the dim labyrinths of fate,
And solving oracles of death and doom.
And so he dragged Pelagius from his height.
He grappled with that specious foe, and shook,
With passionate words and piercing arguments,
His flimsy heresies, as tempests shake
The silvery gossamers of summertide
That fly in glittering ruin. So he taught
That on their children to the latest day,
The clinging shadow of the primal guilt
Of Eden's first bright pair, falls like God's wrath,
In which they lie, as in a painful sleep,
Until the cleansing touch of baptism gives
Divine regeneration to the soul.
Nor of himself can man keep heaven's pure laws.
By nature evil, and to evil bent,
God's grace alone can give him will and power
To turn from sin, repent, believe, be saved.
Yet not on all men hath the Holy Ghost
Poured out the grace that brings them home to
heaven ;

But only on selecter souls, whom God,
In the deep mystery of His purposes
And sovereign will, electeth from the mass
Of millions that have been, or yet may be—
Not for their voluntary virtuous deeds,
Nor one inherent merit in their lives ;
But that Himself, the All-seeing, wills that they
Shall of His love be free recipients,
And starlike jewels of His final crown.

As raged the wordy battle, Saint Jerome,
A learned man, but irritable as fire,
A shrew in temper, and in tongue a wasp,
Rushed boldly to the side of Augustine,
Unsheathed the bitter weapon of his wit,
And mocked Pelagius for his great mild size,
“Swelled with Scotch porridge,” as the Saint alleged ;
Unlike the leaner saints who only breathe
The purest essences of prayer, and fast,
Shaping the body to the soul’s desire.
Again the Father burst splenetic, dubbed
Pelagius, “Highland terrier,” and swore

That, being descended from the barbarous Scots,
Near where the Britons plough and sow and reap,
He ought, like Cerberus, by the poets feigned,
To be well beaten with a spiritual club,
Then with his master, Pluto, straightway doomed
To eternal silence. Next Orosius flung
His mite of malice to the saintly sum.
Pelagius! who is he? A monstrous mass,
Heaven-slighted and hell-blighted for his sins.
“Look at his gross broad shoulders, thick bull-neck
Blown butcher-face, lame foot, and blinking eye,
Through which the Devil leers on human kind!
The man is cursed!” And meaner spirits, too,
Assailed Pelagius—bit and mocked and jeered,
Like curs that, guarded by the huger dogs,
Snap at the placid lion. These he bore,
Bending his head before them regally—
His eyes on earth, his thoughts beyond the stars.

Augustine only was magnanimous
To his serene opponent, whom he called
A gracious man—a man of good repute; ~~hey, more,~~

An eminent Christian, in the saintlier sense,
Whom he had loved, loved still, and still would love.
Yet Augustine, who loved his enemy,
Loved none of his beliefs, but hated them,
And poured the scorching Scripture of the Lord
Through tongue and pen, until the heresies
Became abhorrent to believing saints.

Then met in council Hippo's wisest men,
Grey-bearded bishops, warriors of the Lord,
Who smote Pelagianism—root and branch.
A lie! The prime offender was not there;
But his disciple, bold Coelestius,
Stood up undaunted for his master's creed,
Nor would recant, though urged with eloquence.
Him, therefore, did they excommunicate,
And send into the world a branded man.
Nought caring and nought fearing, forth he fared,
Sowing the gospel that he knew, in lands
Still weedy with the old mythologies.

Meanwhile, Pelagius wandered to the East.

To high Jerusalem, the Golden City,
Where a grave council, deeply pondering
The doctrine of the Saint, acquitted him
Without one censure. Yea, and furthermore,
Another council, at Diospolis,
Who, sounding with the plummet of their lore
His known opinions, found them innocent,
And let him go, to publish through the world
Christ's large redemption. Even Zosimus,
Rome's one grand bishop, and infallible,
Protected the Pelagians everywhere;
Until he saw, being still infallible,
The blot of their too-charitable creed,
Which gave to man divine capacities,
And unto God the weakness of a man,
Whose unelective folly would redeem
The mob of souls—a democratic God!
Thenceforth imperial edicts were flung out
Against the obstinate heretics who dared,
In face of heaven, on poor unknowing hearts,
To spill the poison of their erring thoughts.
The unrecanting suffered for their sins,

By confiscation of their worldly goods;
And if that failed to bring them home to truth,
Or truth to them, then banishment and death
Were sequent healers of these Christian sores.

To Britain, from the vengeance of the Church,
Fled tender-souled Pelagius, and his friend,
Invincible Coelestius; showing still
The faith in whose bright mirror God appeared
All-merciful as Almighty—maker He,
And mender of the children He has made;
Fountain of knowledge that redeems to life—
From death-in-life to life in higher life,
Wherein the spirit blossoms like a flower,
In the white-lilied fellowship of Christ.
The British herds did listen, and were charmed.
Yet not in peace these shepherds had their way:
After them came two prelates militant,
Who sprang upon them from the fiery soil
Of Gaul—Germanus named and Lupus: one
Loud as December, when the cataracts roar;
The other sleek as silence, when she sits

Above the brooding earthquake, while beneath
She hears the central surge, and sees in trance
The pained world split in one wide gash of woe.
Germanus sent his voice upon the land
And shook the flocks from sweet Pelagian dreams
Of safety, rosy mercy, and free-will,
To wholesome terror at their helplessness,
Without God's special grace : and Lupus tore
With cunning arguments and spear-like words,
The poisonous seeds from out the popular heart,
And showed the hideous gulfs wherethro' the sheep
Were blindly plunging to eternal death.
Thus on they went, from town to town pursuing
Pelagius and his comrade ; rooting up
What they had sown, and sowing other seed.
And thousands hearkened, and were saved ; though
some,
Spelled by the sorcery of the easier creed,
Held by it ; yea, and prospered—as do still
Their late descendants in these wondrous times.
But take good heed, ye toiling sons of men ;
Think not prosperity is sign of grace,

Or poverty of evil ! Think of Him
Who had no lodging for His sacred head,
Yet was fit ransom for a world of souls !

It chanced at length upon a summer eve
Of wondrous sweetness, that Germanus paused
With Lupus, at a wayside inn, embowered
In simple roses, and overarched by elms
Whose towering wealth of leafy greenery
Made the place seem as if for ever there
Dwelt dove-like meditation, thinking thoughts
Of holiness and beauty and delight.
A huge-limbed hound lay calmly by the door,
And o'er him sprawled a plump four-yearling boy—
Both silent, not with fear, but inward awe
At something present, yet invisible.
A strangely silent inn : no sound was heard
Of merrily clinking, or of pot or pan ;
No festal noise, no jovial laugh, no song,
Echoed through doors or windows : all was still—
As if fat mirth, full glutted, had lain down
Drowsed, but not conquered,—still to urge the feast

Within the seething wine-vats of the brain.
What could this miracle of quiet mean?
The two men paused—Germanus, like a storm
Struck silent by the silence; Lupus, like
A subtle problem-solver, mystified.
The great hound scanned them with unwinking eye;
So did the boy through fluent coils of hair.
Nor growled the hound, nor spake the boy; but he,
Lifting a finger, pointed to the door,
Then touched his lips, in soundless syllables,—
“That is your way—be silent as ye go.”
They entered, softly treading as they went;
And in a chamber looking to the west,
Laid in a bed, they found a dying man,
Wrinkled and old and grey, and ripe for heaven,—
A saintly figure in divine repose.
Beside him sat the housewife of the inn,
Using what simple genius she possessed
To soothe the halting moments of a life
That needed God’s renewing elsewhere.
“Peace to this house!” Germanus said, and paused,
Scanning the dying man with keener eye:

Then going near, he stood aghast, and cried,
"My God!—Pelagius!—the heretic!"

And so it was. The widely wandering man,
Mild speaker of the larger word of God,
His upward journey done, lay dying there,
Wrinkled, upon a peak of stormy years,
Wherefrom had died the thunder, and whereon
Shone mellowly the gracious beams of eve.
Pelagius oped his saintly eyes and smiled
On his opponents, who, with eager tongue
Assailed him, and besought him to repent,
Ere death's cold hand foreclosed the date of
hope.

"I do repent," the white-haired man replied,
"Of all the sins that I have done or dreamed."

"Nay, of thy thoughts we speak—thy heresies—
Repent of them, and cast them from thy mind,
And save thy soul from death."

Pelagius then,
Hopefully turning to the setting sun
That touched his face and made it beautiful :
“ Friends, Lupus, and Germanus, hear me speak,
Ere I go home, to meet my God and yours,
And Christ, who lived and died for all mankind.
Think not I glory in my human deeds,
Or aught that savours of the dusty world—
Albeit 'tis not unholy in itself—”

“ Thou poor old man, still darkling in thy dreams!
From the beginning is the world not cursed?”

“ Nay, Lupus, all my dreams are dreams of light ;
I see the world but as a blessed work,
Since God the Father made it, and His Son
Did wear it as a garment, gloriously !
Both old and poor am I ; and all I know
Is as the glimmer of a mottled cloud
To the pure splendour of the mysteries
Which yet shall be unveiled, and shall become
The common heritage of common men.

Yet what I know, I think I know from God,
Since it inspires more ardent love for Him
And All his children—ye two not the least.
Have patience with me, for I faint towards death—
Fear not—”

Then for a little space, he dropped
Into a swooning sleep, while the two men
Stood silent by, yet thinking thoughts of doom,
Judging the passing soul. How kindlier she—
Over him hanging like a wet-eyed flower
That droops upon the grave of innocence—
The hostess of the inn, who on her breast
Laid the hoar treasure of the saintly head,
And nursed it, as a daughter whose dear sire
Is gliding from her arms to come no more.
At length he sighed, and oped his eyes, and
smiled,
As from a region of celestial peace.

“Once more, Pelagius, for your poor soul’s sake,
Cast forth your errors, and be reconciled

Unto the church you have so deeply wronged,—
Then die, secure from the eternal wrath !”

- “My final breath, Germanus,—be it this :
My youth was God’s, my manhood His ; and now,
This mildest sunset of my feeble age
Is His, to do with as He wisely wills.
I trusted Him in sorrow and in joy,
Doing His work the while, I trust Him still,—
Against the church I trust Him ! I do say,
That He, and not the church, is paramount—
That God in man is more than throne or church.
The church should be a wing to shield the soul
- In times of wrong ; or in the day of hope,
To lift it to the golden summit, where,
Poised in clear vision, it communes with God,
And learns the secret purpose of the world.
Mean church it is, and worse, that puts a ban
On the free ranging spirit, to crush it down—”

“The church hath power to limit and define
Eternal verities by Christ revealed.”

“Well, Lupus, answer me, or answer not :
What church can limit the Illimitable?
What mortal power define eternal truth,
That flows from year to year, from less to more,—
Shall flow from more to most in far-off years,—
A flood as from the mountain to the plain ;
A spring dim-welling as from hidden deeps—
Or in the mighty Book, or mighty heart
That beats to music of the infinite?
All truth is God’s how poor soe’er it seem ;
From whatsoever source it come ; for God
Hath made all sources, and all substances
Of matter, or of mind, or prophecy,
Or arts, or sciences, through which His voice,
A perfect melody in diverse tones,
Comes to His people of all times and climes.”

“Hath God not spoken once for all?”

“Ay, ay,
I know the windy phrase,—I know—I know!—
Yet hear the oracle and mock it not :

God has not ceased to speak, or to reveal
Mercy and justice, love and tenderness,
Beauty of holiness, and truth of beauty,
Which still illumine the paths whereon we toil
Toward the glimmering heights where blooms the
flower
Of life eternal in eternal light."

Once more, for very weakness, paused the saint,
Whose words came fitfully like broken gleams
That flicker through the clouds of dying day,—
The tranquil prelude to another dawn.
Not all unmoved the two men watched and heard,
Though more in pain than pity, those fond words
By which Pelagius, so to them it seemed,
Did seek to justify his way of life,
And gloze his erring thoughts in face of death,
And God Himself, death's Lord. So Lupus said,
Scarce whispering his measure of contempt,—
"Poor unrepentant, miserable man!
So near thy end, and yet so far from God!"

To which Pelagius, keen of ear, though weak,
"Wrong, Lupus! Here's no misery, but joy;
Unutterable faith and confidence
In the All-merciful. Lo! He is here—
His friendly hand I take—I die!—I live!"

And so, with wandering words upon his lips,
He passed away, sweet-smiling, like a child
That falls asleep upon its mother's breast.

"So dies a heretic!" sleek Lupus hissed:

"So dies a saint!" the housewife meekly moaned:

"So dies a man!" a stern bold voice rang forth:
And all were startled by the sudden sound;
And looking round, beheld a bearded form,
The fire of lions burning in his eye,
Glaring upon them with offended front.
Yet O how tenderly he knelt him down
Beside the silent shape; and tears he wept,
Not all of grief, but mingled grief and joy;

"My dear, good master, happy is thy death ;
Let me but live and fight as thou hast done,
Serving the Master, fearless to the end,
Then shall I die content. Farewell, brave saint !"

So spake Coelestius, for he it was ;
And when the others knew him, they withdrew,
Knowing the warlike mettle of the man,
And went their way, speechless for many a mile.

Glen Rosa.

GLEN ROSA—Glen Rosa!

Can I forget the day
When, in thy heathy wildness
I met sweet Helen Gray?
Helen Gray was bonnie,
Helen Gray was fine,
O Helen's lip was tender,
Helen's eye divine,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

For I had lost my way,
And might hae slept my last sleep,
But for kind Helen Gray;
For Helen wi' her young lambs
Cam' liltin' down the Glen,

While a' the gloamin' listened,
To hear her voice again,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
How blithe was Helen's smile,
As to her hame in safety
She led me mony a mile!
On bed o' budding heather
In dreams a' night I lay,
And thought that still I wandered
Thy wilds wi' Helen Gray,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
Next morn I gaed away,
But a' my heart was lowin'
Wi' love o' Helen Gray;
For ere that we had parted
Beside the birken-tree,
I gied my heart to Helen,
She gied her heart to me,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
Ae lang, lang year had sped,
And mony a ghostly vision
Cam' bodin' to my bed;
And ilk sad morn I waukened
To dree a sairer day,
For voices seemed to whisper
'O woe for Helen Gray!'
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
I crossed the gurly sea;
And Arran's peaks were grumly,
A gruesome sight to me;
My thoughts flew on before me,
Like sea-gulls ower the spray;
But aye cam' back sae mournfu',
Nae news o' Helen Gray,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
When I cam' to the kirk,

I heard a voice o' wailing
Far through the lanesome mirk ;
Cauld terror freezed my heart's bluid,
Nae farther could I gae—
Before me moved the white wraith
O' my ain Helen Gray,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
The spate was roaring loud,
And mony a torch was flashin'
Beneath the flying cloud ;
They sought by moor and wild wood,
By scaur and rocky brae,
Till in a linn they found her—
My poor drowned Helen Gray,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!
The sun still shines in thee ;
But in my heart nae sun shines—
Nae joy can ever be :

Alang thy wilds I wander
The dreich, the dreary day—
O to be asleep and laid
Beside sweet Helen Gray,
Glen Rosa—Glen Rosa!

Prospice.

NOUGHT is so mean as not to be
Sweet with some hidden melody ;
Nought is so great as not to find
Responses in the humblest mind :
 Being subject to what they see not,
 All men would be what they can be not.

Dwell ye with love ; its might can still
All apprehended pangs of ill ;
Then death, the fool's calamity,
Is love's serenest remedy,
 Bearing to God the soul forgiven,
 Tear-washed, into a friendly heaven.

Inglorious were it but to be
Lord of a dead antiquity :

Lo ! on this living English morn,
Christ with each babe anew is born ;
 And from each death, through brief dejection,
 Blossoms the flower of resurrection.

To him who looks beyond the years,
There is no woe in human tears ;
But a sweet plenitude of peace,
Made for the soul's divine increase ;
 Wherein, like hope, she winds her story,
 Starlike, through widening spheres of glory !

Goodbye.

WHY should I say goodbye, my dear?

Why should I say goodbye?

I am only going a little way

Over the hills, and only a day,

Only a sleep, with a dream, and then,

When morn breaks rosily up the glen,

With blackbird, and throstle, and lark,

I'll come again,

And wait till the bird of the dark

Outwarbleth the song of the lark,

And wooeth the moon from the dark,

And lifteth our souls on high, my dear :

So, why should I say goodbye, my dear?

Why should I say goodbye?

Why should I say goodbye, my dear?

Why should I say goodbye?

I go, yet still I'll be with thee,

And staying here, thou shalt be with me!

Ah! nought can part us: and when the night

Flies from the dreaming rose, and the light

Hath kindled in flashes of song,

Love in his might

Shall fold us from terror and wrong

In the murmuring garden of song;

For song hath no kindred with wrong,

But only with love that is high, my dear:

So why should I say goodbye, my dear?

Why should I say goodbye?

The Sword.

"I SEE a sword above his head,"
The keen-eyed, haughty Prophet said ;
"Unwise, the Fool, he cannot see
The sharp impending destiny !"
And swiftly, ere a lip could ope
For mercy or in song of hope
There was a murmur in the air,
But not of prayer—

The Fool was dead !

But did the seeing Prophet see
A dim sword, visible to me,
Brandished above his own wise head,
Watching the Fool there, dripping red ?
I know not ; but ere wisdom could
Utter one syllable of good,

The glimmering weapon downward sheared,
And rose, blood-smeared—

The Seer was dead !

Unlike the Prophet and the Fool,
Shall I escape the fatal rule?
Nay, well I know, though do not see.
Fate's falchion hangs even over me :
But let it strike, as strike it must,
And give my flesh unto the dust,
Be sure, its edge shall blunted rise
Before men's eyes—

When I am dead !

The Planet and the Daisy.

WITHIN a woodland, cool, and still, and dim,
One dewy diamond gleaming on her breast,
A solitary Daisy sweetly grew,
Watching the Planets as they bloomed and sang.
Imperial Jupiter, the many-mooned,
Seeing the adoration of the flower,
Spake from his silver orbit, golden-mouthed :
“Though thou shouldst gaze to all eternity,
Thou couldst not comprehend me.”

Then the Flower
Answered in whispers which the Planet heard :
“Knowledge not being content, I seek it not ;
Thy nature, purposes, and destiny
Are all beyond me, as thy station is—
Insoluble. So be it. It suits me well,

Here, in this cell, to bloom my little life,
Then sleep. Meanwhile, to see thy wondrous light,
And hear thee nightly sing amid thy moons,
Is joy sufficient for a flower like me.
Yet, O most beauteous Planet, hear me speak :
As I to thee am measurelessly small,
So thou art small to Him who made us both.
I know thee not ; but know'st thou me? Not bulk,
Nor visible splendour, but the spirit of each,
Moving or fixed, owning divine control,
Is the true worth of all. A small green leaf
May hide me, as a cloud-leaf thee."

The Star,

Burning within his luminous moons, replied :
"Thou livest an hour—I live millenniums.
Empires have risen and fallen since I arose ;
Empires will rise and fall ere I decline."

Whereto the Daisy, lifting her meek eye
To the bright galaxies that belt the world :
"Remembering the Ancient Lord of all,

The hoariest star that kings it through wide heaven
Was launched an hour ago into the void,
And in one hour will pale. For life is not
Measured by beatings of a temporal wing,
But by eternal purposes fulfilled.
Brief though my date, if yet my destiny
Be finished to its point, then I have lived
As long as any Planet of you all,
Largest or least. I am content to be
No seeker, but a silent worshipper
Of that divine effulgence, wherein thou,
Equally with the glowworm, find'st thy light—
That woke me from my earth-dream, and shall fold
My gleam of life within its bosom of beams.”

Imperial Jupiter, the many-mooned,
Indignant splendour flasht, to make reply;
But ere one haughty syllable was flamed,
A cloud, the measure of a baby's palm,
Blotted him from the Daisy's patient eye.

The Defeated.

My happy morn of youthful years
Was not bedewed with tears ;
Hope, like the genial orb of fire,
Illumed the heaven of pure desire ;
And things impossible to bearded men
Were easy conquests then.

I swore me liegeman to the light,
To human weal and right ;
Life's splendid ills I would not grasp,
Because they hid the asp ;
And the white lies that mean men tell—
I sent them back to hell.

But the high visions of the morn
Wither in midday scorn ;
And man, sore-hammered by the fates,
Oft does the thing he hates :
So I, who early walked in heaven,
Fell earthward, rent and riven :—

Fell earthward—and the things I spurned,
When life, a pure star burned,
Became, perforce, my daily mates,
Not loves, but hideous hates ;
As if, for sins and base desires
God burned my soul with fires.


Ye who are young and pure and free,
Stand fast by liberty !
And follow still each holy vision,
With unappalled decision ;
And still, though lashed by pitiless fate,
Touch not the thing you hate.

Let not the Tempter's kiss of fire
 Quench one divine desire ;
Be scorned, be hated, be reviled,
 Yet be thou Mercy's child ;
Better, like Stephen, bleed and die,
 Than live an honoured lie !

Tobe.

BENEATH the golden glamoured moon—
The moon of great September,
I met her in the dells of Doon—
O heaven ! when I remember !—
And if my heart were burned to dust,
Her soul would be the ember !

Around the woody mount we strolled,
Between the crisping hedges ;
We heard the breath of autumn rolled
Among the withering sedges
That drooped beside the stream that fled,
Moon-haunted, down the ledges.



In mine reposed her pulsing palm :
Her eyes, divinely tender,
Gleamed from a cloudless heaven of calm ;
Then at her feet so slender,
I fell and worshipped, and in faith
Did all my soul surrender.

We clasped ; we kissed ; we swore an oath
Beside the reedy river—
Nor want, nor woe should break our troth
Nor arrow from death's quiver—
A burning oath, to bind our souls
For ever and for ever !

A Summer Friend.

My early friend, now is it well
To smile when fortune smiles,
But frown when fortune sounds the knell
Of all my bravest toils?
Come, is it well to cloud thine eye
And turn thy face from me,
And in cold silence pass me by,
When all the insects see?

O, for the generous morns of youth,
When fortune was no bar—
When we two, like twin-souls of truth,
Flashed like a single star!
When each for each would rush to fight
Against the banded foe ;

Content to know but one delight,
And own a single woe !

But, early friend, my early friend,
Some sands are yet to run ;
And no man's fortune hath an end
Until his life be done.
Why, Fate itself may yet relent,
At Mercy's strong appeal ;
Will then thy doubting heart repent ?
Thy coldness uncongeal ?

I care not for the common frown,
The common world's neglect ;
No lesser man can stare me down
With fortune's grand effect !
But thou, to join the baser rout,
Thine ancient friend to ban !
Great God, defend me from the doubt
That there is truth in man !

The New-Comers.

I.

SURELY, my heart, there is no sweeter sight
Than the mild visage of a new-born child,
So like a vision of the undefiled—
As if one star held empire of the night
And drew all worship to its single light,
The newest word of God to mortal men !
And what the word ? or crook, or sword, or pen ?
Shall he be shepherd to bring home the lambs
From roaring deserts to the bleating fold ?
Or warrior to build up a throne of shams
Dripping with blood from all its gems and gold ?
God, doom it not ! Yea, rather do thou mould
A breather of a pipe whose tender trills
Shall ease poor human hearts of daily ills !

II.

What spirit is this that cometh from afar,
Making the household tender with a cry
That blends the mystery of earth and sky—
The blind, mute motions of a new-lit star,
The unlanguage'd visions of a folded rose?
A marvel is the rose from bud to bloom,
The star a wonder and a splendour grows;
But this sweet babe, that neither sees nor knows,
Hath wrapt in it a genius and a doom
More visionful of beauty than all flowers,
More glowing wondrous than all singing spheres;
And though oft baffled by repelling powers,
Growing and towering through the stormy hours,
To perfect glory in God's year of years.

The Burial.

(ECCLEFECHAN, FEBRUARY 10TH, 1881.)

THE snowdrops, they waited long
Under the pure cold snow ;
They heard the tempest's song,
And the turbulent river flow.
But in hours of calm, the sun
Severed the sweet white drift,
And the snowdrops, one by one,
Peered through each slender rift,—
And lo ! the Spring's blue lift !

They listened, and heard the tread
Of carefully pacing feet,
As of some one making a bed
Beneath the tearful sleet :

They wondered what it could mean,
And who was to lie therein,
Winds cold, and the stars so keen,
The grass so sere and thin,—
Less warm than the mole's soft skin.

At length the bed was made ;
Then they heard another sound,
Like winds that moan i' the glade,
Or leaves that whirl on a mound.
'Twas the rustling feet of men,
As they bore their Chieftain cold
To his own familiar glen,
To his quiet native mould,—
O lion heart of gold !

And the snowdrops, tears o' the storm,
In whispers soft and sweet,
Bemoaned the silent form
Muffled from head to feet ;
And they bent them all, star-white,
Over his solemn bed,
And ringed him round with light,

Like seraphs about the head
Of a sleeping babe, dream-spel.

Then the mourners went their way,
Heart-heavy with their grief ;
And cloudily closed the day
Over the quiet Chief.
Ah ! little he knew or cared,
Though over his wondrous name
Small wits their weapons bared,
To wreck by their coward game,
The splendour of his fame.

Sleep calmly, O lion heart,
And let the witlings rave !
No terror hath mean art
For soul so true and brave.
Their work may live a day ;
The eternal in thy word
Will see the stars decay,
And still, like spear and sword,
Flash lightnings of the Lord !

Prospero.

LISTEN, magician ! can you hear
In these mild flutings, faint or clear,
One note of the poetic chime
That never ceases through all time ?
Know you the charm ? you taught him it
When, rich in dreams, though green of wit,
Quaint Ariel you found, and you
Learnt him the art of being true
In song or silence. Listen, then,
And think it is the Sprite agen
Who, brooding o'er your ripened skill,
Warbleth your music back, until
You hear your fine ideal self
Rhyme-doubled by the Island Elf.

O sweet the illusion ! if it bring
To memory that heroic Spring
When ye together for a space
Wrestled with storms, and won a grace—
Bit of blue sky, a song, a flower,
Whose odour haunts this April hour,
After the wrinkled years have fled,
With harvests of the happy dead.

How is it now? Dear Bard and Sage,
Though blasts have beat with blinding rage
On head and heart, yet have you borne
Your honoured brows into the morn,
High, equal with the first and best,
With flowers of potent merit pressed.
You may have known, as all men may,
The sadness of a fruitless day;
But still the barren-seeming sky
Was quick with planets to your eye
Of vision ; and within the gloom
You saw the featful Ariel bloom,
Nor scorned him for his loreless years,

Knowing that he, through toils and tears,
Would ease the burden of old time
With lilts of music winged by rhyme—
For when the Epic sleeps, the Song
Rolls life full merrily along.
But ever in his mind he heard
The counsels by the gods preferred,
Through you, their prophet, breathed to him,
Peering in regions vast and dim,
Leaning his ear to wondrous doors
Of flower or shell on starry shores,
If haply he, by magic sleight,
Might capture some unsung delight
For the great Ballad yet to be
Chanted for man's posterity.
Then wisely smiling, would you cram
His Epic into an Epigram,
And show that Song's perfection lies
In quality, and not in size—
Taking the bold-winged Ariel down,
To scenes of unachieved renown :
For Nature's Book is not half-read ;

And even Shakespeare's splendid head
Could not conceive what shall be found
For ages in the common ground.
You clipt the wing, so that it might
But take a larger, surer flight.
So Ariel found, though often crossed,
And buffeted, and tempest-tossed
In the seethed elements whereinto,
Dear Prospero, he was freed by you.
But wheresoe'er, on peak or plain,
He found him, or in joy or pain,
He bore the vision of the Isle,
A treasure in his heart the while :
No mean accumulative star
E'er ruled him or in health or scar.
But you have left the Isle ; and he
Now sees you in your kingdom—free
And fair and sweet. But Ariel,
In haunting still the wizard cell,
Misses the sun-dream of the place—
Miranda ! child of love and grace.
Ah, she was fair ! So, evermore

Her fame is blown on sea and shore :
Her name is as a charm that clings
To memory more than names of kings.

That be your comfort, Prospero :
And this—that, as the seasons flow,
And wind us in a coil of dreams
Of Nature's still unfinished schemes,
And man's proud temples waste and flit,
No syllable of your golden wit
Shall fall unheeded, but shall be
Caught in the heart of melody ;
There to be cherished, there to bloom,
To make for man a sweeter doom.

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